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OVERLAP • 8 SEP • PAGE 20

CROSSROADS

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INTRO OR EXTRO?

PAGE 16

Farmers field Myers-Singgs



VACHON SLEIGHS 'EM

PAGE 30

From the 'Butcher' to Pere Noel



TUCCI'S TOKES

PAGE 43

Rating medical marijuana

TUESDAYS

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SEVEN DAYS

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WEEK IN REVIEW

DOI: 10.1002/for



Late Wednesday President Barack Obama declared the growing gap between rich and poor "a fundamental threat to the American dream. The next day, customers at The McAllister's on Wilburton Road in South Burlington were surprised with a noontime treat of "Hail the Buggers, Buggler! Free. Make our bugs disappear!"

About two dozen protesters brought their demand for visible signs into the fast-food entry via McDonald's modernized and brightly lit—strikingly planned, it was unclear how much those modernizers' fiscal managers declined to comment on the South Burlington municipal office of a nationwide day of walkouts and solidarity demonstrations. At least four restaurants in support of a \$15 an hour wage.

The demonstrators weren't as well-organized. Kevin J. Gohery reported on the Seven Days of Moscow being the of

Three imprisoned officers in the 'free check-out' and response population by the Occupy Wall Street movement.

Girls sing: "Like a leader should,
Her fellow protesters joined in with this chant,
'Womans in red cloths, we're giving a tribute / And people like us, / are standing with there / to demand McDonald
respect the right, / to work with dignity.'"

Lisa McLeod, a spokesperson with McDonald's USA, declines to say. "The District and our senior operators are committed to providing our employees with an

opportunities to succeed. We offer employees advancement opportunities, competitive pay and benefits. And we invest in training and professional development that helps them use practical and transferable skills.

"We also respect the right to voice an opinion, and commit to 'to right' star the headlines, however the events taking place are not stable. Outside groups are traveling to McDonald's and other outlets to stage rallies. Our restaurants remain open today — and every day — thanks to our dedicated employees serving our customers."

Fast-food workers in the United States earned an average \$9 an hour or \$18,720 a year in 2012, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. That's more than the current 10-cent minimum wage of \$7.50 an hour but less than a Senate proposal — endorsed by the president — to boost the minimum to \$10.10.

Ashley Smith, a member of the Vermont chapter of the International Socialist Organization, said that subcontracting municipal workers and employees of city universities was "an important victory" with the adoption of years ago of a livable wage ordinance. It cut pay into a minimum of \$10.94 an hour for those with little insurance and \$15.83 for those without. "It's there are hundreds of other workers in

Lutington who isn't making a livable wage? Smith said, "Everyone in this city, this state and this country should be guaranteed at least \$15 an hour."

facing facts



CONFIDENTIAL

Four students were sent to the ER after "pregaming" before a UNM security party at the Old Laramie Delta Delta house.



NEW RELEASES

Former governor Jim Douglas was injured after he was struck a deer on I-90 in Colubene. No word on how the deer fared.



圖書在版編目(CIP)數據

State legislature accused a
Burlington paper of revealing House
Tupper illegally on Connecticut
hoarding



FOR THE JOURNAL

THE LINE DESIGN
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 woman got a \$100
 top as part of our
 new collection made

That's how many hours that staff spent supervising mental health patients on hospital IDs last year according to VTIbayes.org. The program cost the ID Health more than \$



TOP FIVE

ARTICLE 18. CONCLUSIONS

1. "Are You There God? It's Me, Vladimir Putin!" *Pravda* (Russia) 12/12/01. Vladimir Putin's first interview with the Russian press since he took office as president. (Source: <http://www.pravda.ru>)
2. "Vladimir's Chief Advice Was to Ignore the Opposition and the Drug War." *Pravda* (Russia) 12/12/01. Vladimir Putin's first interview with the Russian press since he took office as president. (Source: <http://www.pravda.ru>)
3. "Russia's Foreign Policy Is Intimate Approach." *Pravda* (Russia) 12/12/01. Vladimir Putin's first interview with the Russian press since he took office as president. (Source: <http://www.pravda.ru>)
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SEVEN DAYS
WEDNESDAY

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Lecturer/Writer; Jeff Scott
American Cancer Society; Michael Jackson
Senior Writer; Philip Davis, Editor; Seth
Chandler-Kellogg, Reviews Editor

Prof. Kenneth S. Powell
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7
FEEDback
READER REACTION TO RECENT ARTICLES

QUESTIONING KISONAK

Did *Seven Days* film critic? Rick Kisonak and I even saw the same movie (*Movie Review: "Phantom"* December 4). The *Phantom* that I and 92 percent of Boston *Times* critics wrote was funny, touching and cleverly written, and boasted a typically excellent performance from Judd Apatow. Rick has displayed some pretty erratic judgment this year, as evidenced in his reviews of *Star Wars* and *The Conjuring*. Two other film critic critics overwhelmingly loved but he hated. At the same time, he gave *Graveyard Book* 2 stars (it got 7 percent on *Rotten Tomatoes*).

Nicholas Cook
POND, NY

DRUG WAR ISN'T WORKING

Edwards to Vermont Chief Justice Paul Reber for his comments on the failure of the war on drugs. Vermont's Chief Justice is speaking out Against the Drug War in *Against Lustrum* (December 4). Ever since President Nixon declared our national effort of drug prohibition, we have spent \$1 trillion, and what do we have to show for it? Drugs have crept into every corner of the country, our youth are overrunning (most people are in the prison for drug offense in the U.S. than the total number imprisoned in Europe for all offenses), Mexico, our third largest trading partner, is nearly a failed state (90 to 95 percent of Mexico is controlled by

the cartel), drugs are widely available in schools across the country, the polluting of pristine mountain from cocaine processing has continued (estimated more than 100,000 and 100,000 gallons of chemical waste poured directly on the ground per year), widespread corruption within law enforcement, corrections and the financial services industry — just to name a few.

By speaking out on the issue, Chief Justice Reber has created an opportunity to debate the merits of an alternative to prohibition — that we might fix what is broken before it claims more lives and dollars. This December marks the 99th anniversary of the Harrison Narcotics Tax Act, it is high time for that debate to occur and I challenge all elected officials to comment on the salient results of our conspicuous failure.

Peter Stevenson
WHITEFIELD

ROWELL NOTES

[Re "In the Spiritually Populated NER, a Classical Music Series Turns" October 24] Just a note to say that Mary Rowell of Cheshire, a truly superb musician and concertmaster of the Radio City Music Hall Orchestra, is also a member of the Cheshire Chamber Players and sister of Dave Rowell (husb. Rick & the Bluebirds) and the WDRB (New England) and Frances Rowell (another great string player in the Cheshire Players) she was a colleague of the STEEL quartet.

Danny Caine
MONTPELIER

TIM NEWCOMB



WEDNESDAY

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FAIR GAME OPEN SEASON ON VERMONT POLITICS BY PAUL HENRTZ



Read My Lips

The most dramatic moment of last winter's legislative session came on its closing days, when House Speaker **MARK SWARTZ** and Senate President Pro Tem **JOHN CAMPBELL** nearly provoked a vote fight with Gov. **PAUL**

At issue? Whether to make a last-minute edit to the tax code that would cut income taxes for 72 percent of Vermonters and ratchet them for 5 percent.

Hatched by Rep. JAMES WOODS (D-Calif.) and Sen. TOM ADAMS (D/Vt.-Chittenden), who chair the legislature's tax-writing committees, the proposal would have capped income-tax deductions at two and a half times the standard deduction and set a minimum tax rate of 3 percent. All the money raised would be plowed back into lowering tax rates a smidgen for everyone.

Though Anzel and Ashe said their proposal was revenue neutral, the governor vetoed it. May 10 press conference to an "on-the-fly" scheme to raise taxes. Having spent the four-month session railing against rising bread-based taxes (he spoke having proposed \$4 million in new spending himself), Shumlin was ready to pass a dozen tax bill and show legislators the door.

Caught in the middle were Smith and Campbell. Their liberal consciences generally liked the plan, but the two men recognized how tough it would be to override a gubernatorial veto — if it came to that. At first, both signaled tentative support for the proposal and delayed adjournment by several days to work out the details.

But after Blomgren applied his trademark vice grip, Smith and Campbell caved. At a hastily called press conference in the Statehouse cafeteria, they said they'd reached an agreement to put off the fight until the 2014 session, at which point they'd only have a month for the tax plan.

"We expect that the proposal will be under consideration for next January, and we will move forward with that next January," Smith said on May 13. "We look forward to conversations with the administration about how we can do that over the next couple of months."

Added Campbell, "The governor has assured us he will be working with us over the next six months to accomplish the goals set out by the speaker."

When they concluded their remarks, Shumlin's secretary of administration, **JOE MARBLETON**, told reporters that he and the governor were more than happy to have a considered discussion over the summer.

"I wouldn't be surprised if the legislature and the Shumlin administration

do reach common ground for some tax reforms next year that lowers tax rates for all Vermonters," he said.

So how did those six months of discussion go?

Says Campbell, "When you talk about priorities, the worst thing to do is talk about your priorities a year in advance, because so many things happen in the meantime."

These days, Campbell says, he's focused on addressing drug abuse and over-increasing property-tax rates.

"If I knew then what I know now about these problems, I would certainly have said that reforming the tax system definitely takes a backseat to those," he says.

THE WORST THING TO DO IS
TALK ABOUT YOUR PRIORITIES
A YEAR IN ADVANCE

SEN JOHN CAMPBELL

Angel and Ash, the plan's champions, say they've done little more over the past seven months than meet with leaders of several nonprofit groups who had expressed concern about how it would affect charitable giving. They have held no community meetings on the matter.

"The speaker and I talk every so often and we certainly discussed the income-tax proposal, but at the moment there isn't a clear path or a decision about if or when we'll take up the proposal again," Ansel says.

"Time goes by and things change and people's perspectives change," she says. "I know that and I think we all know that at the end of the season."

One thing that's changed: Legislators no longer have the leverage they did when the session was winding down and they could hold the governor's other priorities hostage.

For Smith, the problem with reauthorizing the plan comes down to this: As they head into the next session, legislators are staring down yet another \$70 million budget gap. If they reauthorize in the light over Ansel's and Aole's environmental proposal, it might not stay that way for long.

"Trying to make changes in a revenue-neutral way with an income tax might be difficult in that context," he says. "People are going to want to raise revenue. So they're going to look at the income taxes to do that."

"That," says Ashe, "is a very valid concern. Because what we were proposing at the end of the session was lowering all the tax rates and making a tiered if he believes we can't get through a discussion about tax reform because it would turn into tax increases that's a call he has to make."

And then there's Shumlin, who — no great shocker — appears disinclined to reconsider a proposal he put forward last year. No matter that Spaulding said at the time that he "wouldn't be surprised" if the gov and the legislature reached "common ground" for some tax reform next year.

"Our position is still the same as has been reported: that we would prefer not to do tax reform every year," he says. "We have been clear we would strongly prefer that there not be a tax this session."

Shawcross, L. *Legende France-20*

Greasy Wheels

Congressman **PETER WELCH** nearly took into account of D.C.'s biggest lobbying hurdles — on a bicycle.

When we arrived by car outside the Environmental Protection Agency's Arlington, Va., offices last Thursday to testify against corn-based ethanol mandates, Welch spotted a four-wheeled, pedal-powered, leafblower-toting contraption. Its message—opposing the federal government's Renewable Fuel Standard, which requires petroleum refiners to blend billions of gallons of renewables into gasoline each year—wasn't lost on us.

"Fix the EPA and protect our fuel" the bicycle's billboard read. "Tell the EPA to reduce ethanol mandates."

Welch hopped on the bike, posed for a photo and posted it to Twitter, writing, "What do you think of my new ride?" #HPS

The bicycle, it turns out, was sponsored by Energy Citizens, a front group for the American Petroleum Institute. That's one of the more than 200 organizations that spent as much as \$75 million last quarter lobbying on either side of the ethanol issue. Bloomberg reported last week.

Joining RFI and the petroleum industry in opposing ethanol mandates were the restaurant and meat-growing industries, which compete for corn crops, and the small engine and boat industries, which blame ethanol for damaging engines. They — and Welch, who has become a leading anti-corn-ethanol voice in Congress —

— scored a big victory last month when the EPA released a draft rule reducing next year's Renewable Fuel Standard by three billion gallons.

Renewable Fuel Association president BOE GUNAWAN, who represents the corn growers and agribusiness that favor ethanol mandates, says Welch's role as the AFL's boss is a strong metaphor.

"It's a perfect example of Rep. Welch sort of carrying that message literally and figuratively,"

POLITICS

Dunham says. "The oil industry clearly is pushing and coordinating the effort to repeal the RFS."

Welch concedes that the complexities of the issue have created "intricate bedfellows," with oil companies fighting alongside anti-biotech organizations and anti-environmental groups. But he says he's never worked with Energy Citizens or the AFL, clarifying that his job title was "a spokesperson thing."

"I had no idea who sponsored the bills, but I agreed with the message, so I just happened on," he says. "It was a coal hole and a good message."

Welch maintains that his opposition to ethanol is "totally Vermont homegrown." The tips he first learned about the issue several years ago at Franklin County State Days in Highgate, where a man told him that ethanol-blended gasoline had wrecked his chainsaw. Further investigation, he said, revealed that the mandate was driving up fuel prices for Vermont dairy farmers.

Since then, Welch has distinguished himself as one of the loudest anti-ethanol voices in the House — holding press conferences, introducing legislation to scale back the mandate and testifying at last week's EPA hearing.

His industry allies have evidently taken notice.

In the past year, several trade groups fighting the Renewable Fuel Standard have contributed to Welch's reelection campaign. Those include the Petroleum Marketers Association of America (\$2500), Society of Independent Gasoline Marketers of America (\$4500), National Association of Convenience Stores (\$10,000), National Association of Truck Stop Operators (\$10,000) and the National Restaurant Association (\$2500).

Welch says his work as ethanol issues reporter that flurry of contributions — and his role. Welch held his first ethanol-related press conference at a Wallfax Day event in April 2011.

But it's worth noting: From a politician's perspective, the best big-money lobbying fights in D.C. are those in which you can pick a side amenable to your constituents, make a lot of noise and watch the industry contributions roll in.

Welch doesn't care that way.

"My advocacy has been based on the

fact that Vermont farmers were the ones who got me interested and my investigation showed that this was, I think, a really important issue for lots of reasons. As far as who contributed to me, you've got the record there," he says. "Why the hell couldn't you have to ask them. But there haven't been any coordinating activities or anything like that."

Welch also has a personal interest in the issue.

As he mentioned during last week's EPA hearing, the congressman's chainsaw stopped working unexpectedly several years ago. When he brought it into the shop, he says, he was told ethanol-blended gasoline was to blame.

"My own chainsaw got wrecked," Welch says.

Media Notes

Two of Vermont's top political reporters have landed new gigs — one in, and one out of, the journalism world.

WCAK-TV anchor and senior political reporter **AMANDA CALDWELL** is leaving the station after 14 years to head up Green Mountain Power's communications shop, the electric utility announced Monday.

Carlson got her start at Channel 3 as a college intern and "blondie" but rose up the ranks, she says — as a producer, reporter, storyboarder, bureau chief and finally co-anchor of "The 340" the station's 530 p.m. interview show.

"I've only ever worked for Channel 3," she says. "It's always been my passion. I love reporting — love it. Nothing can ever replace this."

Vermont Press Bureau chief **PETER MANOUELA** isn't leaving journalism. But he is leaving the newspaper biz to join the capital bureau at Vermont Public Radio.

Hirschfeld has joined the Associated Press in 2003 as sports reporter and copy editor. Since 2006, he's covered state government at the Press Bureau, which is jointly operated by the Herald and TP. Hirschfeld replaces **JOHN GALLAGHER**, who became VPR's news director in September.

"It was just a really exciting opportunity to try some new things in the news business and to join a really exciting and growing news-gathering organization," Hirschfeld says.

VTigger, meanwhile, has hired Seattle native **MICHAEL TROTT** to replace former Boston-area reporter **AMANDA TRAS** (comes from The Blackston Enterprise in Massachusetts and previously worked for the Associated Press' Concord, N.H. bureau). Stein left Tigger last month to work for state Auditor **OSCAR MORALES**.

Mega-discussion: Tim Ashe at the dramatic partner of Seven Days publisher and co-editor Paolo Rousky Paul Livetti previously worked as Peter Welch's communications director. And Seven Days and WCAK are media partners.

The Passage of Paris and the Value of Vermont in the Century of Burlington



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Plane and Not So Simple: Who Spent How Much Arguing For and Against the F-35?

By KENNETH KELLEY

Several months ago, Nicole Gitty, 40, a great-niece to a senator, on the front porch of her Shrewsbury home. Her simple gesture started something big: Sen. Patrick Leahy and Gov. Peter Dummer both recently hailed as a winning "grassroots campaign" to have a squadron of F-35 fighter planes at the Burlington International Airport.

But in the plane's opponents, the Green Ribbon campaign more like political Astroturf, an effort underwritten by Vermont's biggest business interests and hoped by the state's most powerful pols. It's a case of the 1 percent promising to be the 99 percent, says Paul Fleckenstein, a leader of the F-35 Coalition.

Gitty, owner of a South Burlington on-screen agency and daughter of a Vermont Army Guard master sergeant, school edges receiving financial help from organizations such as the Greater Burlington Industrial Corp. and the regional and statewide chambers of commerce. Weekly

expenses such as center Ernst Pomeroy also made contributions, so did "10 or so" local companies, Gitty adds.

Together, she reckons, business sources accounted for "around half" of the Green Ribbon campaign's total size of "a little more than \$10,000." Gitty says the rest of

It was definitely a grassroots thing. Nicole really worked Facebook hard," Pomeroy says. And for opponents who departed the campaign as "a bunch of big, bad business guys" who wanted the F-35 for the money it would bring in, Pomeroy has two words: "That's bullsh*t."

community wasn't behind them."

The phrase opponents deny they have been critics of the Guard. Their objections, they say, have been directed solely at the F-35.

GRN president Frank Goffi depicts the Green Ribbon campaign as a genuinely populist, push for a closed-basing option favored by a majority of Vermonters. "One thing I learned from working with Nicole," Goffi adds, "is that grassroots support for the F-35 just overbalanced the opposition" in terms of numbers. That was despite backing not being "as loud or as well organized" as those opposed.

Gitty criticized the campaign spontaneously, without prompting from, or coordination with, any established organization, Goffi adds. "She's a one-woman army." As evidence of her rising stature of the effort, Goffi points to the "many gas stations and rent-a-cars" that gave away green ribbons, along with pre-addressed postcards that supporters were asked to sign and send to the Air Force.

TO THE F-35'S OPPONENTS, THE "GRASSROOTS CAMPAIGN" IS MORE LIKE POLITICAL ASTROTURF, an effort underwritten by Vermont's biggest business interests and most powerful pols.

the money came from "hundreds" of work-a-day Vermonters who either made small donations or bought market-up merchandise such as hats and T-shirts emblazoned with pro-F-35 slogans.

"I know people" was a particularly popular bumper sticker associated with Gitty's campaign.

Proponents such as he and Gitty were actually motivated by a desire to "stand up for the Guard," Pomeroy says. F-35 opponents, he charges, were "misleading" the 100 Vermonters who serve with the Green Mountain Boys. Gitty adds that he got involved because "I didn't want the men and women of the Guard to thank the

Afterburned? Residents in the F-35 Flight Path Share Their Views on the Plane

By CHARLES SCHACKER

US Sen. Patrick Leahy stood with the top brass and seconded a popular note at a press conference last week celebrating the U.S. Air Force's announcement that 38 F-35 fighter planes would fly out of Burlington International Airport.

"We were really such a grassroots effort in this state," Leahy remarked to 200 members of the Vermont Air National Guard.

But for some people who make their homes near the airport, Leahy's statement didn't convey the whole picture.

"Yeah, there's broad grassroots support. But there's also broad grassroots opposition," said Julius Portillo, a Windsor student and associate professor at Champlain College who creates humor at among the workers.

This past weekend, a three-day response wound roughly 20 households in the flight path in Windsor and South



Ray Hansen and Julius Portillo

Burlington. Residents were divided evenly between those who welcome the planes and those who do not.

A former Air Force pilot who still flies privately, Tyler Hart lives on Kelsey Street in South Burlington. In fact, he and his wife, Kathy, moved there seven years ago in order to better access BTV. Hart says he and his wife don't mind the noise from the F-35s currently based there, and the

couple doesn't worry about the F-35s on the horizon.

If anything, he and his wife have felt like spectators in their support for the F-35, he said. The months of debate leading up to last week's decision were dominated by the opposition. Hart said, as when the South Burlington City Council held a meeting near his home for residents to voice their opinions, he took the opportunity to present "a more neutral position."

In his argument, Hart made a case for the strategic importance of the Vermont Air National Guard base. As the Northstar's report, he said it deserved the most advanced military technology. After the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, Hart pointed out, the Vermont Guard was the first to establish an airport in New York City.

Several Windsor residents echoed that point, including Kelley and Hansen.

born on WatSpring Street. They then just resided with the Green Mountain Boys, they explained, and Kelley used to serve in the U.S. Marine Corps. Now retired, from working as a technician and film digitizer, Kelley enjoys watching the F-35s fly over their home.

"They're gonna be noisy," he said of the F-35s, "but every once in a while."

"That's the noise of freedom," he wistfully added.

Portillo and his wife, Kathleen, a teacher at Champlain Valley Union High School, listed several reasons for their opposition to the planes. The Air Force hasn't demonstrated the safety or cost effectiveness of the jets, Portillo said, and no one has ruled the possibility of creating a field for homeowners whose property values drop as a result of the housing. With three young children, the couple is worried about the impact on students and believes their windows

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LOCALmatters

Too Close to the Edge: Vermont Lawmakers to Focus on Shoreline Protection

BY KATHRYN FLAGG

When legislation to restrict development along the edges of lakes and ponds failed to pass the Vermont Senate last spring, the bill's supporters left the Statehouse with a new concern: What if property owners begin to preemptively clear their lakeshore parcels to avoid restrictions that might win approval in the 2014 legislative session?

It may have already happened at Seneca Lake, which straddles the border of Benning and Caledon, according to state environmental officials.

"Word is that the landowner did this 'just' because he was led to believe that he would lose all control over the management of his own shoreline property if a statewide shoreland bill passes," ANR environmental scientist Amy Piroette wrote in a July 31 email to Trey Martin, the agency's senior counsel for government affairs. "There's small exchange cases to fight as the result of a public records request filed by the Conservation Law Foundation that asked for disclosure status of any shoreland development 'ad consensu' to ANR as the legislature's disagreement."

"As you know, CLF was very concerned by the legislature's failure to enact strong shoreland protection legislation prior to its adjournment," so how CLF senior attorney Anthony Iampicini explained the request. "While I hope that these concerns are unfounded, I fear they may not be in all cases."

In this case, the Seneca Lake property belongs to a developer called Bear Recreation, who bought a roughly 600-square-foot lot on a two-acre parcel last April, according to Benning town records. A photograph attached to Piroette's email shows the small white structure perched above the water, on what looks like a freshly logged slope of stumps and new dirt.

Piroette says ANR employees learned about the clearing while doing some routine monitoring at the lake. "Initially, Benning did nothing illegal, and ANR didn't take any enforcement action against him. Benning did not return messages from Seneca Days seeking comment for this article."

But for Susan Warren, the program manager of ANR's Lakes & Ponds Management and Protection Program, the shoreline clear cutting perfectly illustrates "why we feel we need some kind of regulation." She and other scientists at ANR say Vermont needs to adopt statewide rules governing lakeshore development, rather



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Shoreline Forest at Seneca Lake



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than relying on a patchwork of local rules — which in many cases amounts to no rules at all.

Vermont passed some shoreland development rules in the 1990s, but they expired a few years later and were not reinstated. Ironically, those old rules inspired legislation in Maine, that Vermont lawmakers are considering as they craft proposed restrictions here. Today, ANR says, Vermont is the only northeastern state without a comprehensive lakeshore protection rule on the books.

According to a 2010 report from the Environmental Protection Agency, shoreline degradation is the number-one problem for lakes all around the country. Vermont is no exception. Here, 82 percent of lake shorelands are in "poor" or "fair" condition because of excessive clearing, which often compounds by the installation of driveway parking lots and other impervious surfaces.

In a report to the legislature in January of the year, ANR officials confirmed that damage rates in Vermont's lakes exceed the national average. In fact, they're doing worse, in terms of shoreline disturbance, than other lakes in the northeast region.

A well-forested shore is the first line of defense, according to the same ANR report. Vegetation filters runoff, prevents erosion and provides habitat for fish and other shoreline-dwelling wildlife.

But in Montpelier, crafting legislation to protect lakeside vegetation has been an uphill battle. Environmentalists and some lakeshore property owners supported a House-passed version of new rules, which would require permits for most new or expanded clearings for impervious surfaces within 250 feet of a shoreline. H.316 also calls for ANR to create vegetation management standards for those lots.

But concerns about property rights and governmental overreach caused the bill to stall out in the Senate, specifically in the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy. Over the summer, lawmakers dispatched a shoreland commission to collect public comments

PHOTOGRAPH BY TOM

10/17/13 BY TET

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IN LOCAL MATTERS

and educate Vermonters about potential restrictions, more than 700 people turned out for six meetings throughout the state.

In Terpenzio's view, the legislative roadshow was a staffing tactic designed to pique opposition of the bill. Sen. Diane Stealing (R-Charlotte), vice-chair of the natural resources committee, saw it as a chance to hear specific complaints about ways in which H.2526 could be improved. On the barrel especially: "People are really concerned about how much bureaucracy there is." Some critics who attended the committee's meetings argued that other water quality threats are more pressing than lakehouse development, including beaver, pesticide spraying, invasive species and agricultural runoff.

Although the commission's final report isn't due until January 15, a draft released last month recommends the legislature continue its consideration of regulations in the coming session.

Meanwhile, Stealing has drafted a new bill that regulates shoreline development under Act 250, the state's land use and development act, rather than setting up a new permitting process. Currently most lakehouse permits aren't subject to Act 250 because of their small size. Additionally, Stealing's legislation, which she'll introduce during the coming session, lays out specific numbers and definitions for shoreline protections — for example, the suggests preserving vegetative buffers for 75 feet from a lakehouse edge.

"It provides a standard which people can comply with," says Stealing. "I heard very clearly from people that they want to do the right thing that Vermonters want to help protect their resources and they realize that everybody has to participate. They just want to know what the right thing is."

Warren says that ANR routinely hears from property owners concerned about potentially destructive development on their lakes — but for the time being, ANR has little or no oversight over these activities.

About 30 percent of towns have enacted shoreline protections, but ANR officials say that's not a substitute for consistent and clear statewide guidelines.

Van'dt expects legislator Nicholas Richardson to Glaser to support this effort. He called ANR over the summer to report on one of his citizens' bad ideas: how to remove lakehouse vegetation from the shores of Lake Perkins, but he refused on grounds it would lead to erosion. The client simply had another logic to do the environmentally questionable work.

Despite that, Richardson still believes regulation and enforcement are best left to individual towns and cities. He points out that state agencies can barely enforce the laws they already have on the books.

"Now you want to throw in a shoreline monitoring of every lake and pond in the

state of Vermont?" he says. "Not going to happen."

Rep. Thomas Terpenzio (R-Rutland Town) says hopes not. He calls the proposed rules a "power grab" by ANR and its leader, Secretary Deb Markowitz, and wishes lawmakers would drop the proposed legislation altogether.

"If you buy a home or a camp on a lake or a pond, you paid a considerable amount of money right there," says Terpenzio. "And then for the state to come in and set up all these guidelines of what you can and can't do with your property — I just think it's wrong. I think it's an overreach by government."



FOR THE STATE TO COME IN
AND SET UP ALL THESE
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WITH YOUR PROPERTY —
I JUST THINK IT'S WRONG.
I THINK IT'S AN
OVERREACH BY
GOVERNMENT.

REP. THOMAS TERPENZIO

"This isn't about power," counters Markowitz. "This is about the health of our lakes."

Markowitz says that Vermont can't afford to wait much longer to protect the health of those waters. Officials at ANR received other complaints about prescriptive clearing that summer, though not as many as they anticipated.

"More and more of our camps are being turned into year-round residences," says Markowitz. The usage of deep, wood-bored lakes and ponds has been replaced by a "lawn to lake" mentality that forces green lawns descending to the water's edge.

Those lawns are sometimes treated with herbicides that can poison the water. And even when the grass is not treated, it doesn't provide the same ability to filter other pollutants as denser vegetation, and it replaces the native shoreline habitat that nurtures wildlife and fragile aquatic ecosystems. As a result, Markowitz says, "That has a really serious negative impact on water quality."

琳姿 and Peggy Barter have witnessed that transformation on Seymour Lake. Bruce Barter's parents bought a camp there in the 1950s, and now the Barters, retired themselves, spend half the year at the Northeast Kingdom summer home.

In the six decades Bruce Barter has been coming to the lake, the number of dwellings there has roughly doubled — to nearly 400 homes. More and more people are living on the lake year-round, say the Barters. As more homes have appeared, so too have suburban-style grounds.

Peggy Barter, a retired biology teacher, has seen the phenomenon evolve in Seymour Lake double since the mid-1990s. Subsequent studies by ANR showed that the same alterations that hurt Seymour Lake didn't account for that increase. The extra nutrients, which can fuel the problematic growth of algae and aquatic weeds, were coming from the lakehouse itself. The Barters say that lakehouse residents are already noticing the effects, in the form of thick plant growth clogging the water along the shore. That, in turn, reduces lake oxygen levels and shrinks habitat for fish and other aquatic life.

The Barters are skeptical that leaving shoreline protection to local municipalities will be effective, but they do believe that individuals can make a difference when it comes to protecting better shoreline development practices. Peggy Barter points to the new Vermont Lake View program, a joint effort of state environmental officials and a Federation of local lakes and pond organizations that promotes environmentally friendly landscaping practices.

As a member of the Seymour Lake Association, Barter helped educate other property owners about the program. She says 21 property owners on Seymour last year joined Lake View to their properties for education and they already have a long waiting list for next summer. Other neighbors are planting blueberry bushes along the water's edge, part of the "Barter for Better Lake" initiative through the Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds.

According to Barter, there's all evidence that most Vermonters want to do right by their lakes, they just need to learn the facts. "All the evidence shows that if we don't change our ways, we're going to be sorry," she says.

Contact: kathy@sevendaypwt.com.

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Introvert or Extrovert? Psychoanalyzing Farmers

By CHARLES C. CHICKER

When John Torres stood up before some 50 farmers and agricultural service providers last week, he said he wanted one thing to be clear: "If you were worried about running here and doing a Dr. Phil and sharing all your emotions, don't worry. You won't have to do that."

Plunked by a proprietor across and a Christmas tree, Torres was running a conflict-management workshop for members of Vermont's farming industry. Drawn mostly to blue jeans and sweaters, his audience had come from all corners of the Green Mountain State. Some tipped away at Lipton's others knitted. Nearly all needed themselves of the free coffee, crackers and cheese at the back of the room. It was at South Burlington's DoubleTree Hotel.

DISPATCH

True to his word, Torres never submitted an emotional confession from anyone during the workshop—in part because everyone had already done that with him in advance of the event, all attendees had taken online assessments that ranked the Myers Briggs Type Indicator, a questionnaire that asks a range of hypothetical questions meant to determine your personality type.

Afterhanding a short lecture on Jungian psychology, Torres, director of leadership development for the American Farm Bureau, headed back the individual results and searched into an envelope of his four main sets of traits. Under the Myers Briggs rubric, humans personality types are usually first characterized by whether they're extroverted, meaning outgoing, thinking, feeling and judging (personas) (as opposed to more introverted).

The assessment classified Tom, then, a dairy farmer living near the back of the conference room, as an ISTP—an introvert with sensing, feeling and perceiving qualities. In her last minutes, Torres wrote many lines as the owner and manager of a 220-head dairy farm in St.

Albans, a somewhat paywall owner at the local regional newspaper. While there, she acknowledged, "You get so involved with working alone, you almost forget how to work with other people."

But, signed up for the workshop, she emphasized, to help her interact with suppliers and her four employees. Appreciating that her own introversion



had been confirmed by the test, she joked, "It's good to know that there are people as stressed up as I am."

If anything, Torres set out to destigmatize that stigma. The B-I-G-I-M-I-E: Myers Briggs tends to be the most controversial, he explained, because most rubric places a premium on being outgoing. While

for its employees, Chaput doesn't always go. He's recently trained under a leadership expert from Wisconsin, and now likes to forever mark as he ran on that trek.

Sometimes, he blows up when people try to talk to him. "I'm trying to process things. I've learned," Chaput said. "My boss and I don't work so well with people,

You get so involved with working alone, you almost forget how to work with other people.

Tin A BUR

are introverts there on information, introverts can emerge from their solitude with much to offer—unless groupthink discounts their quiet voices.

On the flip, the quiet types had plenty of empathy.

After a buffet-style lunch of tacos and sandwiches, Matt Chaput—an ISTP with a black beard and a red shirt—expressed another frustration. As the hoofmaster at Chaput Family Farms, a large dairy farm in North Troy, Chaput's boss happens to be his second cousin—and an extrovert to boot. Although the farm holds regular meetings

and I thought it would be educational for me to learn a little about why. "As a youth basketball coach, Chaput added, he has already learned that every member of a team has a different personality.

Louise Whitman, an education coordinator at the state agriculture agency, conceived of the workshop as a way for producers and service providers to understand their personality types, leading to better management practices. To that end, Torres devoted a healthy chunk of the program to the topic of managing conflict.

Wh At Ar E Your Plr SoNAlt Y tr At S?

1) Extroversion (E) or Introversion (I) Do you focus more on the outside world (E) or you focus more on the inside (I)?

2) Sensing (S) or intuition (N) When absorbing information do you prefer to look at facts (S) or try to interpret and add meaning (N)?

3) Thinking (T) or Feeling (F) When making decisions do you prefer to look at logic and fairness (T) or people and what is courteous (F)?

4) Judging (J) or Perceiving (P) When dealing with the outside world do you prefer to get things done, decided and settled (J) or do you prefer some leeway to take more information and opt later (P)?

Source: www.16types.org/

According to the Thomas Kilman Credit. Note: Insurance, whether someone's attitude took a head of you, that involve management conflict: negotiating, collaborating, compromising, avoiding and accommodating. After having everyone sit down in journals a time they did and didn't manage to get their way. Torres explained the main of each approach.

"If it's not affecting your bottom line, and if it's not affecting the safety of your organization, do you need to win every time?" Torres wondered aloud to try to illustrate the need for managers to remain open to their employees. Simultaneously, he warned, too much collaboration may lead to inaction.

The latter point may have been the greatest takeaway for Spencer Walton (DNR), a self-described "Myers Briggs junkie" who runs Half Past Farmington's. Interviews with her with more (BUT) and a president of the Burlington Farmers Market among numerous.

"We hear that collaboration is the pinnacle all the time," Walton said, "but it's meaningful to hear that it can be challenging."

In the 20 years they've been together and the 13 years they've managed a farm, the Waltons said they've invested significant effort in understanding each other and the personalities of their own employees.

Nevertheless, Spencer Walton said, "it's not like events like this to hear it out me." ☐

Contact: charles@vermontdispatch.com

Plane and Not So Simple

on WJAX, WFTZ and Comcast channels, as well as full-page color ads in the *Burlington Free Press*.

Bourassa and GRIC together laid out an estimated \$21,000 for a charter plane to fly Shuman and the mayors of Burlington and Wisconsin to Florida a year ago so they could listen to the same message by F-35 on test-run takeoffs. All parties on that trip reported afterward that the plane's run had been within tolerable limits.

Nevertheless, many would have much to give the Green Ribbons inhibitors or how much he spent overall to help bring the F-35 to the Burlington scene. "You not going to say" he replied in response to a question from Seven Days. "There's no reason why I should."

Ciuffi proved almost unshaken, when asked to specify what GRIC spent on the Green Ribbons campaign. He set the figure at "several thousand dollars" but said he did not recall the precise total.

A portion of the F-35 advocacy outlays by Ciuffi's group went to finance a Friends of the Air Guard campaign that ran parallel to and separately from Citra's Green Ribbons drive. Ciuffi does say that about 30 percent of his time at GRIC over the past two-plus years was spent on boosting the F-35. An assistant at Ciuffi's partly public, partly private organization devoted about 40 percent of his time during the same period to the plane campaign. In addition, GRIC contracted with a writer-researcher for a one-year period to work exclusively on F-35 matters.

Personal resources devoted to the pro-F-35 effort — by the state congressional delegation and as well as by workers at business-promotion groups — should also be factored into any computation of the cost of the Burlington buying efforts, Wickham says.

But the financing of the local campaign to bring F-35s to Vermont will likely remain opaque. Citra didn't do the legal work that would have been required to establish her campaign as a nonprofit organization. Acting as what she says was the adviser of her accountant, Citra decided that filing incorporation papers with the Vermont Secretary of State's office "didn't seem worth it because of the time it would take to go through that whole process."

Instead, she says, "I've been keeping very detailed records for my own tax return" in regard to money she collected and spent in the name of the Green Ribbons campaign. But the public won't have access to Citra's personal tax returns, while it would have been able to review at least some of the donations and expenditures for the pro-F-35 effort if the campaign were to file the 990 IRS form that nonprofit organizations are required to submit annually.

The Stop the F-35 Coalition has a different arrangement. It's an affiliate of Burlington's Peace & Justice Center, notes activist Blaise Anderson, which places it under the umbrella of a nonprofit. But that doesn't mean journalists or members

of the public can see its financial records.

Data on the FIC's tax returns, the IRS form donors require enough detail to reveal each affiliate organization's assets.

In the interest of transparency, Bourassa says he'd be "perfectly willing to sit down with any journalist" to go over the Stop the F-35 Coalition's payables and receivables. Bourassa says that so far this year it had raised \$15,000 from about 200 donors, \$10,000 of which went to pay legal fees. The largest

donor — who asked to remain anonymous — gave \$12,000 in cash and paid \$8000 to improve the organization's website, Bourassa reports. Another contributor stopped giving the Vermont Democratic Party to the tune of \$100 a month and now instead sends that sum to the coalition, Bourassa adds. He says he doesn't know the names of the many individuals who put small bills into a bucket that the coalition passed around at its events.

An e-mail from Ben Galen says he gave the coalition "around \$12,000 or \$15,000" — a sum that included the cost of the massive sound system the plane's oppose on regard to City Hall Park this summer to simulate the roar of an F-35 takeoff.

And the Stop the F-35 Coalition isn't giving up — at least not in terms of getting its message out, which Anderson says has consistently been. "Lure the Guard, hate the plane," it's aiming to raise another \$75,000 in 2014. ☐

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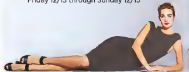
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OBITUARIES

Bernice Shervington

DECEASED **JOHN J. JOHNSON**
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 Cathedral Square, in Burlington, Vt.,
 received her angel wings on December
 2, 2018. She died peacefully in her
 sleep after a long period of declining
 health. Bernice was born January 22, 1938
 in New York City to Nat Harned Johnson and
 Louise Singleton Johnson. She enjoyed
 the simple pleasures of life: socializing
 with friends, travel, TV movies, friends
 and family. A broker in 1995 took her
 independence but not her loving outgo-
 ing spirit; she continued to enjoy life with
 her daughter's care. All will remember her

wonderful smile that lit up a room. She loves to mourn her daughter Gwendolyn's grandmothers: great-grandchildren Berna and Towen, best friend Delores, and other relatives in New York and Las Vegas, including Ruthann, Williams' maternal aunt. Berna, Nathaniel Jr. and their families Berna's soul is now reunited with her parents, her mother Bernice, her husband Clyde, her daughter Bernadette, and her nephew Nathaniel Sr.

A wake will be held on Wednesday, December 11 from 2-4 p.m. at Elmwood-Mcasser Funeral Home, 97 Elmwood Ave., Burlington. Flowers or a donation to the Charnellam Senior Center are welcome.

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†Indicates strong through moderate correlation; ††Indicates strong and †††Indicates moderate correlation at 0.05, 0.01, 0.001 level of significance, respectively. Values in parentheses represent degree of change. Correlation graphs with scale legend at 0.05, 0.01, 0.001 are given. Values in parentheses – difference of given variable from 0.05, 0.01, 0.001 level of significance. See Appendix for list of 10 best parameters for each of 10 best parameters for 10 best parameters for 10 best parameters.

El Hachimi et al.



PHILIPS

QUICK LIT: WAR, PEACE AND POETRY

"A Sonnet is a moment in a monument," wrote Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Nowadays we're more likely to immortalize the fleeting moments of our lives via Facebook and YouTube. But poets continue to preserve their memories in the amber of verse. [not just sonnets, of course.] One of the most interesting aspects of reading local poetry is discovering the rich architectural diversity of those personal monuments.

Last weekend I read three locally published poetry collections in which the authors wrote, variously, about picking up a CSA, picking tobacco in segregated North Carolina and picking one's way through the ravaged wreckage of Iraq. Let's take them one at a time.

In the unvarnished letters and poems are the true faces of war: artists **JENNIFER REASONS** in her second collection *Reasons to Find a Screen*; "the former Marine and Iraq veteran" co-edited the *Combat Paper Project*; now Turner works with the *Related Peace Paper Project*. He lives in the organization's website, mystic "Touan is now upon his family, growing food, holding care many caring places, and acknowledging some of space."

"poems in *Reasons* reflect that shift from making the honors of combat to building a life in the aftermath through the rediscovery

of traditional rituals." The book's first half includes Turner's first set of published collection *Eat the Apple*, with its jagged imagery of war, sometimes experienced through the lens of post-traumatic stress disorder. "[Each fear] becomes a metronome," writes Turner of a soldier on alert. "If and his gun was the instrument, / remembering only one song." In "Christy," he writes powerfully of wanting to exist in moments as well as things.

I am hoping that one day a large sample will rise from my chest and with one quick squeeze the memories are gone. In the second half of *Reasons*, Turner turns his attention to songs of calming love and healing, many evoking nature and Lakota traditions. A poem about tree shrews captures, for instance, becomes quasi-mystical. The year round is his / diamonds / undug from its cultivated skin / that intricate web / through vast chambers / of unknown life. Turner writes:

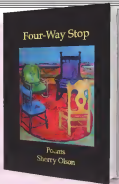
Wars "True Faces" may hide in poems yet uncertain—one of Turner's poems describes an Iraqi child begging for a pencil, as if to write his own story. But this author has given us access to his own experience, along with moments of surprising grace.

Grace is a recurring theme in **SHERRY OLSON's** *Four-Way Stop*. In fact, the Portland editor's verse sometimes poses the question: Is it possible for poetry to be too happy?

"As not to say there is no darkness in the collection which touches on war, global catastrophe and the travails of the artists to whom Olson teaches poetry writing at a community center. Most of these poems, however, are

more like the title lyric for many urban drivers: *Four-way stop signs spell aggression*. Yet it's hard not to feel a little schism of one's irascible reactions to drivers who dawdle or jump the gun as one reads Olson's radically optimistic take on taking turns at the signal.

A feeling like kinship or family or love comes over me every time.



A Half Century Later, Burlington's Austin Handbell Choir Is Still Ringing

BY PAMELA POLSTON

The Burlington's First Congregational Church, has been performing for 50 years. You read that right, 50. Since the Beatles came to America. And the group chose to perform for its debut concert last "I Want to Hold Your Hand" but "Anytime" Manager "Go! go!"

This Sunday, the Austin Handbell Choir will perform a half-century after that debut, to the day. One of its earliest continuous members, **LOUISE HANSEN**, happens to be the president elect of the First Congregational. **STELLA STEINBERG**, also an early member, has been the bell choir's director for 19 years.

JUDITH GOODMAN has been ringing with Austin Handbell for seven years and handles publicity. Retrieved from the USDA National Resource Conservation



Service, Downside plays, too, with the Vermont handbell group **NORTHMAN CHOIR**, which has performed with **BELLA VOICE** women's choir. Clearly a handbell devotee, she generously attempts to straighten out this reporter on the

various kinds of bells and chimes and the ways of ringing and striking them.

The origins of handbells are as much profane as artistic, as this ability entertaining passage from a Wikipedia page suggests:

"Tower bell ringers' enthusiasm for practicing the complicated algorithms of change ringing can easily exceed the neighbors' patience, so in the days before modern sound control, handbells often served a way to continue ringing without the need result.

Five handbell choirs in the Green Mountains State are listed on the Handbell Musicians of America website, none of them the Austin group. (Not everyone belongs to the same national association, Downer says.) Adding to the confusion, a choir with the website austinhandbells.org in Texas. In Burlington, the Austin Handbell Choir gets some from its original headfacer.

Warren K. Austin (1877-1962) was a U.S. senator from Vermont for 15 years.



J-1
Why does it always work, this understanding so that today here at this hectic intersection completely unperceived we are so polite to each other and kind?
Not for nothing is Olson attentive to the mute power of traffic signs: her dad she reveals in another poem

did the research that helped put white lines along our highways
The poet describes following those white lines as an everyday pleasure, one of many the collection showcases. Among the moments Olson monumentalizes are trips to Paris and Greece, restaurant meals, dog walks, listening to "Oreg. Liar" and his band All The Black Deer, making toast, taking out compost and gathering "delicious and beautiful" CSA vegetables. "It couldn't be any better," opens one poem about Saturday morning at a dog-friendly beachside.

In short, some of these poems could double as advertisements for the crunchy Vermont lifestyle. Yet they have an eloquent simplicity and dissonance in her subjects feels both genuine and contagious. By the end of the book, readers may find themselves recombining the alpine aesthetic in "flying" when the poet asked to "clap with me / if the landing was good." He claps along with Olson in thanks for blessings we normally take for granted.

Autobiographical poems sometimes get a bad rap, but they need not be navel gazing, often. The poet "monumentalizes" his or her own youth to capture and preserve

DOUGLAS WRIGHT

"STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN" ISN'T ON AUSTIN HANDBELL'S SET LIST, BUT REST ASSURED, THE ENSEMBLE HAS FAR SURPASSED "AWAY IN A MANGER."

and was appointed ambassador to the United Nations, explains Doerner. After he died, his widow wanted to make a donation to the church as his memory, and **BURCH LAMARINE**, then the minister's wife, proposed a handbell choir. And so it was done. Lawrence will attend this Sunday's performance, says Doerner, and "will be specially recognized for all her efforts."

Not all handbell choirs are affiliated with churches. Just check out the amazing cover of Adele's "Rolling in the Deep" by a New Jersey high school handbell choir on YouTube. And an "advanced community handbell choir" in North Carolina called the Raleigh Ringers "are just phenomenal," advises Doerner. That group's after the *Barclay's* Raleigh Ringers, leads at their regular tasks.

INFO

Austin Handbells choir, 130th Anniversary Concert, Sunday, December 7, 3 p.m. at the First Congregational Church, 38 South Woodside Avenue in Burlington. Free. 978.853.3233

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A Jolly Old Soul Wants to Know: What Do Vermont Arts Organizations Want This Year?

By Karen J. Kerr, by

What do Vermont arts organizations want for Santa? Money, in one form or another, is what seven administrators said when we asked them to reveal their most wished-for gift this year.

That's not surprising, given the pinch penny budgets that squeeze so many of the state's arts promoters and makers. Those impressions were generally straightforward in expressing their hopes that the white-haired old dude with the reindeer would drop bags of cash down their chimneys. But a couple of the artists phrased their requests in especially imaginative ways. So, on an often the case on Christmas morning, we're serving the biggest surprise for last.

John Kilbey, director of the **Plym** center for the performing arts in Burlington, says last of the list holiday wish is for "everyone to slow down and come see a show at the Plym" during the next couple of weeks. That's a busy box office would actually be just a means toward giving the Plym promoter the gift he's gotten most of



Photo by [unreadable]

all. "I'm happiest when making other people happy," Kilbey says, "and the shows at the Plym make a lot of people happy." That's why you find all of them get standing ovations, he suggests.

Bill Free has wanted Santa to deliver to the **Vermont studio museum** another like avant-garde fashionista, **Wendy Carr**. She's both curator of and artist in the museum's current show, **Fashion**

and **Fantasy at the Edge of the Forest**, which runs until year's end. The wild collection of history- and nature-based costumes has been wearing all who see it, Brink says. He also hopes Vermont art enthusiasts of all ages will wear the model train exhibit that the Middlebury institution organizes every holiday season. This year's version currently fills a 30-by-30-foot room with miniature farms, villages, passenger stations and three sets of Lionel trains.

John Adcock isn't asking for any gifts for the Vermont arts season, per se. Instead, the VAC executive director says his fondest wish for the festive season is for the members of the U.S. Congress — particularly those in the darkly be-gifted House of Representatives — to get "a new attitude." Yes, Adcock acknowledges, that could result in state arts organizations receiving slightly larger slices of the federal funding pie. But, he says, he'd settle for Congress "just being a little more aware that the arts can be part of so many sectors" — education and social services, for example.

Jerry Frost isn't leaving any doubt

A Winooski Pop-Up Art Market Settles In to Stay

By Amy Lally

agony — who has puzzled over the odd unlikelihood of Winooski's roadblock — one said thriving with restaurants, the other mostly vacant storefronts — will be happy to learn of **Winooski Circle** arts. The store, which had its grand opening on Friday, creates a year-round home for the pop-up art markets that brightened those empty storefronts for a few holiday weeks in 2011 and 2012.

On a recent morning, sunlight brightens the room's dramatic feature two angled columns painted red, reaching from corner floor to lofty ceiling. It's hard to remember why such a space was ever empty.

The carefully chosen selection of fine arts and crafts items, most made in Vermont, are grouped by use rather than artist. A kitchen display includes South Isles hand-cut glass lamps, whose swirling forms are made from pulped banana leaf. **Pin Up Pictures** and **Crafts** items made by Vermont's recent artists, who grow their own ingredients or picks them from the woods, adorn a table



Photo by [unreadable]

The accession corner holds a hand-woven "farm fresh hat" made by **Alison & Alison** in Bennington, and a locally made and painted blue-rimmed **Neil Peters** bowl. **Alison & Alison** is the

shop in her Winooski home. The blue painted wall displays prints and original art of all styles, from the framed abstract, black and white ink on glass by **John & John** (owner of the former Burlington design store **Walker**), to linear holiday cards by **Colin** (owner of the former Burlington design store **Walker**), to linear holiday cards by **Colin** (owner of the former Burlington design store **Walker**), to linear holiday cards by **Colin** (owner of the former Burlington design store **Walker**).

The attractive, honey displays were jointly designed by retail manager **Ann** (owner of Burlington and store founder **Art**), **Harrington**, a longtime Winooski resident. Harrington painted face the floor for each display area and **Conne** sound proofed sales and **Becky** (owner of Burlington for the vintage display tables, racks and chairs).

Cowen is an artist and photographer whose "Polar" series paintings in the style of Matisse and Picasso, vintage cover keepsake boxes and framed photos of her pug **Sally** are among the items for sale. She "heavily curates" the remaining inventory, she says. Cowen's thorough knowledge of the local art scene

led her to such finds as the meticulously woven sweet grass baskets of **Norma** **Wassington**, a Winooski resident whose South Carolina relatives told her the grass that's been used since slavery days in the Southern traditional art.

What isn't lost from Harrington among these gems is that Winooski Circle Arts is an artist's cooperative. Starting after the holiday season, members will pay a fee to cover rental space for a share of the store's profits. (Until then, they own significant percentage of sales of their own work.) Harrington and Cowen weren't merely intent on promoting local artists and artisans, as

THE EXCITEMENT FOR US IS THAT
we're cReATING
Something THAT everyone
ownS and HAS A Stake in.
JoDi Harrington

about the size of the gift he wants Santa to bestow on **WINESOD CIRCLE ARTS**. Mike that check out for \$700,000, Mr. Claus. That sum would pay off the mortgage on the community arts center's building in St. Johnsbury and enable the nonprofit to spend \$4000 a month on program rather than interest payments. The money would specifically be used, Fried says, to expand arts education for local students and to make reduced-price tickets available to Northeast Kingdom residents who otherwise can't afford to attend. Clausman shows.



**MAKE THAT CHECK
OUT FOR \$700,000,
MR. CLAUS.**

In Burlington, **WINESOD CIRCLE ARTS** has an equally specific and even more ambitious wish. The director of **WINESOD CIRCLE ARTS** would like Santa to please wedge beneath the arts organization's tree "a Christmased wrapped gift" of a 30,000-square-foot

building, preferably on Pine Street. That modest addition would allow the outfit thinking BCA to locate all its programs in one (architecturally stunning) space, Kraft points out.

A "TARDIS" IS LARGELY Winson's request for a gift to the **SPRINGS PLACE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER**. Say what? "You know," the director gushes, "the name evokes inspired by Doctor Who?"

With the device, Olson fantasizes, he could transport jettison Giant Buns, opera boater Bianca Carius and select film heronbird John Harrison to the 433rd Street venue to show contemporary audiences some of what they've missed. Olson says he would also include Nelson Mandela and John F. Kennedy in his

WINESOD ARTS • PAGE 17

they had done with the pop art stores. They wanted to create community too.

"It's ethical. It's about keeping a healthy thriving local economy," says Cowan. "If it doesn't build community it's just about commercialism, and I'm not interested," confesses the frank 64-year-old. Cowan moved to Burlington from New York City in 2001 and owned Pine Street Art Works until closing it in 2010.

Harrington, a native Vermont whose family dates back many generations, is equally adamant about bolstering her community. The 57-year-old worked for 10 years in cooperative business environments — even with City Market/Union River Co-op in Burlington and three with Opportunities Credit Union. She says original discussions about the Winooski state centered on socially responsible business models, such as a B corporation that "in terms of profit, people, planet — the triple bottom line of socially responsible businesses," she says, "the cooperative is easier because

it's all been done."

If Harrington and Cowan insist any risk with the cooperative model, it's for their own jobs. "Five years from now, when this thing is wildly successful, the artists could fire me and me," Harrington explains. But that doesn't concern her. "The excitement for us is that we're creating something that everyone owns and has a stake in."

It takes a certain kind of person to approach business so unselfishly. Harrington admits that Winooski Circle Arts may only be possible "with people of our age and ilk." But, given both women's experience, the stars may well anchor the roundabout's neglected strip and set the stage for more local businesses. Says Harrington, "We like to think we're launching this baby with a lot of advantages." ☐

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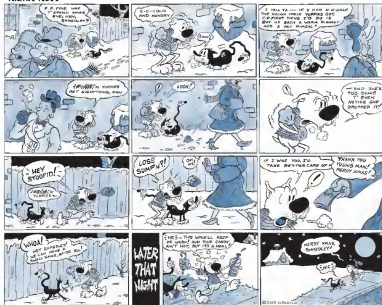
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MANGY MUTT



Quick Lit

40 P.12

the shades of a way of life gone by. In this new **MARY JANE DICKERSON** brings her North Carolina childhood alive in rapping the center of things: a collection that spans decades. The books first half is a series of deftly described recollections. The reader experiences tobacco harvesting; children; a science that took show; a "Three Summer" that is "shadowed by the rising heat of perennials yet rich in earth beauty" ("My garden is a scene where their patterns / in black and white over mean polished walls").

A Jemcho resident and retired University of Vermont English professor Dickerson may seem to have left the South behind. But ties to the past won't so easily be broken as she reveals in "My inheritance," a powerful lyric that appeared in *Hopkins in 1998*.

... still I am pulled southward always
toward red clay toward gray sandy loam crumbling
and falling through fingers: my grandfathers
and yours: my father until I too reach out

through peats and mires and cup my hands
to receive the soil
in the collection's second half Dickerson explains the Vermont landscape: and with the woodstoves of a huddling hills and crisp autumn come creeping reminders of entropy and mortality. It tribute to the "lost blue woman" doubles as an elegy for a beloved son. In the delicately devastating "Reminders, Elegy" the shifting coastline below a beach house becomes an emblem of time's destructive power. Yet the poem stands just as Roosevelt suggested poetry should: as an indelible reminder of what the outside place has meant to us. / Its presence and ours alive always in every passage / we make through memory's house."

MARGOT HARRISON

INFO

WISCONSIN OP-Field 2 (1998) by Jan Turner
Sewall 2001 Press, 84 pages, \$24. For a copy email enquiries@op-field.com
New Way Stage: Poems by Henry Olson
Farrar, Jones, 100 pages, \$16
Tapping the Center of Things: Poems by Mary Jane Dickerson
Tartarus Press, 84 pages with audio CD, \$22.

Vermont Arts

40 P.15



time travels, so they could deliver lectures at his theater now and, presumably, forever.

Because, Olson notes, the TARDIS can travel into the future as well as the past, it also would enable him to see tomorrow's big wins and look them at Spruce Peak before anyone else does — and before they get too expensive.

Santa might need to replace his sleigh with a TARDIS to fulfill the wish of **BETH BAKSA**, marketing director of the MONTAIRE MUSEUM OF SCIENCE. "A herd of

dinosaurs" would really pack 'em in at the Norwich institution, Kraai notes.

"Can I have two more wishes?" she wonders. In the spirit of the season, sure — why not?

Kraai wins the next Nobel Prize winner in one of the sciences to acknowledge in an acceptance speech that he or she owes it all to the Montshire. And finally, how sweet it would be, Kraai suggests, "if commitment focused as much on their schools' science programs as they do on their hockey teams." ☺



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Songbird in Winter

Sunday is on any one day off, except when I work on Sunday, which is most of the time. Perhaps I should quit saying that I'm off on Sundays but that would be too depressing — the recognition that I work seven days a week. My problem (well, one of my problems) is that I'm constitutionally incapable of turning down lucrative offers of new jobs, and Sunday is a prime day for travelers returning from trips.

On a Sunday in November, I was booked for two support runs: a student heading back to Middlebury College and a friend returning to her home in Haverhill. (These friend jobs are a whole other issue, because taking money from a friend feels awkward to me, even though they always seem to be more than fine with it.)

Both trips went off without a hitch, and by late afternoon — the rain blurring, the sky darkening — I arrived in downtown Burlington on route to my place. My cellphone was switched off, so Sunday is my day of rest (that I longed to get home, put my feet up and engage in that quintessential American male ritual watching football while eating cholesterol-laden food).

Waiting for the light to change on the corner of Winslow and Main, I noticed a black girl trotting toward me in the rain. She was pulling a wheeled suitcase and wearing a puffy jacket with a fur-lined hood. I couldn't tell whether the hood was a part of the coat or attached to a separate garment underneath. I lowered the passenger window as she reached me.

"Could you take me up to the Ha Haem on Church Street?" she asked.

"Sure," I said. "Let me pull over and pop the trunk."

I helped her with her suitcase, and she took a seat in the back, unstrapped her jacket and dropped her hood. Turned in my seat, I looked into her round and lovely face, open and cheerful despite the circumstances. "I was looking for a cab on the corner of Church Street," she said, "but there were none there. What's up with that? There's always, like, at least one taxi waiting there?"

"Yeah, you're right about that corner, but the cabs usually don't queue up until later in the night," I said, turning the vehicle around in the parking lot of Champlain Farms — known locally as the "winter mart" for reasons too and too numerous. "Plus," I added, "it's raining, and that doesn't help. Anyway, sorry you had to stand around in the rain."

A PART OF ME WANTED TO TAKE THIS GIRL HOME WITH ME, TUCK HER INTO A SPARE BED AND FEED HER ASPIRIN AND HOT TEA.

"Thanks. I think I might have the flu. I'm feeling terrible, so tell you the truth, Oh, and I should tell you this — I need to check at the Ha Haem. If they don't have a room, then could you drive me to the North Star?"

"Let's call first to save time," I suggested. I lifted my cell out of its jewelry-lined dashboard housing and dialed Six. "Call the Ha Haem Motel, South Burlington, Vermont," I recommended. As usual, Six responded confidently, and, as usual, with a non sequitur: Talking to

the woman who lives in my phone is like being in a Samuel Beckett play — the two of us never seem to be on the same page. I handed the phone to my customer, who managed to get the number of the old-fashioned way: Google. The Ha Haem didn't have a vacancy, as she suspected, but the North Star came through.

"So what takes you through Burlington?" I asked.

"Oh, I've been here since the spring," she replied. "The living situation has been shaky, though. But, you know, things always have a way of working themselves out."

"Have you been doing anything for work?"

"Yeah, I sing on Church Street."

"Quite cool," I said. "But that's gotta be a lot better in the summer than this time of year. What can you make on a

good day singing?" Can you take in, like, a hundred bucks?"

"Yeah, on a good day. It is getting too late in the year now, though. Today I did 73 dollars. That's cover up noon, which'll be 45. So, I'll be able to afford a decent dinner tonight. That's what I do — I sing for my supper."

"Where are you from, like, your home town?"

"I grew up in Dearborn, Michigan, but I left home pretty early. I've been all around the country since then."

"Was planning on staying out on Church Street all winter?"

"Well, no!" she said with a laugh. "Today might've been my last day. I'd probably catch some work at a ski area. You know, like cashing in, clearing rooms — something like that."

A part of me wanted to take this girl home with me, tuck her into a spare bed and feed her aspirin and hot tea. Another part of me was jealous. She seemed untethered, or just lightly tethered, to this world. I would say, "True as a bird," but really — how free are the birds? True, they get to fly — and that must be awesome — but the daily scavenging for their next meal has got to get old, not to mention the bring in treats and the commensurate cats.

In front of the North Star, I howled the facts, just my way of supporting the local art. Seriously, this is one significant advantage to being an independent cabster: I get to cut the rates whenever — well, whenever I feel like it. Her words made me feel like I was under-
charging her and she appreciated it.

"Good luck, and I hope you feel better," I said, as we retrieved her bag from the trunk. "Hey, my name is Jeremiah, by the way. What's yours?"

"My name is Blossom."

"Perfect," I said. "That's a beautiful name." And I thought, in time, if just be she well. ☺

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Dear Cecil,

I read once about a pork-processing operation that supposedly was the largest in the U.S. The stockyard, according to the article, had a giant lake of pig excrement contaminated with hormones, heavy metals and other substances so toxic that people who fell in died within minutes. That sounded wrong—surely it would take at least a few hours to die from that kind of exposure. Can you shed any light?

Mike

You're right to be skeptical, Mike. Industrial pig farming is gross, and industrial pig farm waste, which is measured in the millions of gallons, is really gross. However, it won't kill you in minutes. Having investigated, I think we can safely conclude that somebody got their stomachs crumpled. I will say this: Not all the gruesome things that happen on a pig farm happen to the pigs.

We'll straighten that out later. First, however, we need to get a fix on pig poop.

Let's acknowledge at the outset that animal husbandry is an inherently yucky business. Remember Upton Sinclair's 1906 exposé *The Jungle*, about the Chicago meatpacking industry? Maybe you don't, but take my word for it: Conditions were vile, and they haven't gotten much prettier since. The rules change with respect to pigs in that the kind of disgustingness are now diffused throughout the countryside—good if you're a city dweller, bad if you live next door to a pig

farm. Among the trials you may have to endure:

- **Fecal floods.** A modern hog raising operation may house tens of thousands of animals, all producing waste slopsh, which flows into a vast holding pond and mainly just stays there—when all goes according to plan. When it doesn't, such as happened in June 1995 at Oceanview Hog Farm in North Carolina, the holding pond gives way and 15 million gallons of liquid waste translates the nearby, unsewered planted fields and killing 3000 fish in a nearby river. On the plus side, the soybean crop, which thrives on this kind of fertilizer, is likely to come out looking pretty good.
- **Explosive, fiery pig poop.** You think I'm making this up? Well, so pig manure. The most forms of solid animal excrement, gives off methane as it decays—not a good thing

for the environment, but historically not an immediate threat. That changed four or five years ago, when factory farm workers started flushing a layer of foam up to four feet thick floating on top of some pig waste pits. Methane and other gases got trapped beneath it, and when ignited by a stray spark, they can explode with deadly effect. Since 2009, more than such 30 incidents have been reported, with barns destroyed, workers injured and pigs killed as well as 779 destructions. One blast in Iowa burned 1800 hogs into premature bacon. So far the cause is unknown; scientists are on clamping pig detectors also the evolution of new microorganisms in the waste pits. The practice of

feeding hogs leftover grain from ethanol production may have something to do with it. The foam primarily affects farms in the ethanol belt—Minnesota, Illinois and Iowa—and not so much in hog-rich North Carolina and Virginia. Others, though, say this theory is a pile of crap.

• **Inference out of pig.** The nose, and in particular the smell of hog farms can affect your health. My assistant, Una, who's been downwind of a hog landfill on a warm day, describes it as being "like a pile of burning diapers."

The gases from the urine and feces of hog farms contain ammonia, hydrogen sulfide, carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide, methane and other chemicals so corrosive that the ammonia from the barns dissolves metal. A survey of residents near North Carolina hog farms found many suffered from burning eyes, scratchy throat, respiratory problems, nausea, vomiting and similar complaints. The University of Iowa found more than half of pig farmers suffer from pig-related illnesses. Noise inside hog barns can

exceed 110 decibels, enough to cause permanent hearing loss.

• **Toxic waste.** Thus do we arrive at your question, Mike. No question, heavy metals and other poisons readily find their way into what goes into hogs and then what comes out. An extreme example is China, where arsenic is commonly added to pig feed to make the meat redder—a big feedlot there can add a ton of arsenic to the soil in five years. Similar problems, albeit on a lesser scale, can be found in Western countries.

Extensive searching of news databases turned up no case of anyone dying (purely as a result of inhaling only pig excrement. Just the same, you don't want to lose your footing at a pig farm. In September 2012, a 69-year-old Oregon hog farmer named Terry Gower, known for the exceptional size of his animals (some weighed more than 700 pounds), went missing after going out to feed them. All that could be found several hours later was his dentures and some body parts. Although no title remained to permit a precise determination, apparently he'd fallen and been eaten by his pigs.

INFO

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Illustration by Dan Marino

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At the

tip-top of the new White River Junction
White River Junction, Vt.

By [illegible] Photo by [illegible]

Crossroads



Matt Hays atop the Tip Top Building



The Greenland Building

The only sign of activity inside the former American Legion Hall in White River Junction is the low hum of the high-tech, ultraviolet testing system, which sits incongruously amid blackened cast-iron beams in the back room of the painted building. Still, you can sense the presence of the historical occupants who only recently vacated the premises. Dark, gleaming grooves mark various latches, fixtures, and the lanky neck of thousands of smoked cigarettes is so thick you can feel it on your tongue.

As he leads a tour through this long, midcentury building just south of the modern, but busy downtown, real estate developer Matt Hays, 58, acknowledges with a chuckle that the place requires a bit more work than does the standard four-upper. But the scale of this renovation project, which will convert the much of the downtown commercial district by nearly two blocks, doesn't seem to faze Hays. He purchased the 22,000-square-foot property about a year ago, for \$400,000. It's his fourth major renovation project in White River in the past 20 years.

The previous three—the Hartford Woolen Mill and the Tip Top and Greenland buildings—have already played major roles in the surprisingly rapid revitalization of this small Upper Valley village. (Along with Quechee, Wilder, Hartford and West Hartford, White River Junction is one of the five incorporated villages that constitute the town of Hartford.)

Each of these projects followed a similar plan: Hays purchased a tired old building whose derelict state evoked White River's long, forgotten glory days. For months, he courted commercial and fine artists, thereby becoming one of several



Entrance to the Tappan Landing



Nortwestern Junction crossing

local landowners to lay down a new path for the village's future. "The river would no longer be depressed, rough, and untamable mill town but a town of Vermont's creative economy. Which is not to say that the village couldn't or wouldn't hang on to certain elements from its colorful past."

The denizens of White River have embraced the changes wrought by Barry's representations. It's hard to find anyone who isn't enthusiastic about this major transformation, and it would probably be impossible to find someone who doesn't like Matt Barry himself, a tall, amiable man with an easy laugh.

He's something of a local celebrity, in fact. On a recent Monday morning in the Tuckerton cafe, the de facto hub of White River Junction's downtown, Barry greets about every third patron who enters. "He is beloved by everybody who knows him," says one of them in a teasing whisper. "The son of us?"

Barry may be the central and currently most active figure in White River's town square, but he's not the only one. He has picked up a granddaddy thrown down by an earlier generation of residents who long sought to make their village a more pleasant place to live and work. To understand what White River is and will be, it's necessary to understand what it once was.

Conjunction Junction

The river that runs through this small village is white in no way (except to the south), but the last word of the town's name could hardly be more apt. The past, present and future of this village—home to fewer than 1000 Vermonters—have been irrevocably shaped by the forces of confluence.

First there were the rivers—the reason that the village exists at all. The settlement was originally built at the site where the White River, on its way southward from the mountains, joins up with the Connecticut River. Once a few bridges were constructed there in the early 19th century, the place became an ideal site for a trading post.

Then came the railroads. Between 1847 and 1870, developers brought no fewer than five railroad lines through the small settlement, thereby swelling the village's

on hands, depots, saloons and, later, textile mills, bakeries and factories—more its very existence in the railroad.

Finally, there were the roads. Now known to motorists as the point where Interstates 89 and 81 meet—a confluence has made possible by construction comes in 1949—White River Junction is also the place where the east-west U.S. Route 4 intersects the north-south U.S. Route 8. If you're driving across eastern Vermont from almost any direction, or almost any road, you have to make an effort to avoid passing through White River.

The meeting of the highways was a boon to big box retailers and chain restaurants, which flourished just across the river on two free New Hampshire. It also helped hotel chains, which opened locations just off the highway in White River. But that growth occurred a mile or more from the Junction's village core, and few tourists or commercial truck drivers visited the village center.

The railroads brought the boom, and the highways brought the bust. As less and less commuter and commercial traffic found its way downtown, factories, warehouses and mills shut their doors, leaving hollow buildings in a decades long period of decay.

The nuclear power came when the railroads themselves fell into decline. By the 1970s, trains were hauling much of the crops that had once filled freight trains, leading some of the rail lines to discontinue service to White River altogether. The internet's reach brings the most recent of the village's historic convergences, and the last that could be charted by maps and newspapers. But there's another, less measurable convergence that has given just as much definition to White River Junction. It's more of a creative

and even economic one, but no less real. In recent years, the town's blue collar identity has converged with the so-called creative economy.

(It's impossible to discuss the renewal of White River without referring to Northern Stage and the Center for Creative Studies. This small village is home to both a professional regional theater company and an internationally renowned school of playwriting—a claim that few, if any, smaller towns could ever hope to make.)

More than any others, these two entities embody the nation of White River's creative economy. Not only do both Northern Stage and CCS employ artists, but, in attracting patrons of the arts to the town, their very presence stimulates the local economy, inspiring visitors to take in a meal before the show, a cup of coffee after the exhibit, local shopping while in town for the weekend. Stage it is! For the artsy side that Northern Stage and CCS bring to White River Junction, there would likely have been no influx of other artists setting up shop there.

Catherine Toberty, 34, is Northern Stage's producing director. She notes that it was not a simple task to establish a theater company in White River, but that it would have been even more difficult without the support of locals. "We've been assigning a nonprofit in a very challenging economic time," Toberty says, "but the Upper Valley was as tough." The subscribers have and the community have stepped behind us." In White River Junction, past, present, future, art and commerce are linked in each other like so many train cars. And, at the moment, Matt Barry is operating the switchyard.

**I'M DEFINITELY A
FUTURE THINKER;
I'm much more
Interested In
what will happen
in 20 to 30 years.**

—Matt Bar Y

population, the size of its commercial district and its wealth. These were the boom years, and they banded into town by rail.

The Central Vermont Railway and the Connecticut River Railroad served in 1847, the Green River and Passumpsic Rivers Railroad and the Northern New Hampshire Railroad came through town in 1848 and 1850, respectively and the short-lived 34 mile Woodstock Railway was finally completed in 1875. These lines made the village into a hub of trains—and its textile commerce. The downtown—now

At the Crossroads by David Brigg

Staying Home

Busy is nothing if not renowned. The Wyoming native bought his first property, the former Hartford Warden Hall, when he was just 29 and had no experience as a developer. At the time, he didn't even feel particularly connected to White River. "I thought I was going to move to New York City," he says. "But then I thought maybe I could put sort of roots in the 'New York' thing up here."

He financed the purchase and renovation of the building by means of out-of-state credit cards, and, much to the landlady's delight, construction so he could do it himself. Prospective tenants started calling him up before he even formally owned the building.

Busy's father, appalled by his son's use of credit cards to finance real estate development, stepped in to help him out financially. Along the way, Busy taught himself everything he needed to know about finance. "I think I ended up with a better understanding of all that stuff than my father," he says.

With the debt paid off and all 30 of the building's units spaces rented, Busy moved on to his next project: a complex on North Main Street that had housed a variety of commercial businesses since the 1970s.

"I worked right next to it for almost 10 years but had never even set foot in it," says Busy, referring to his days as a programmer at the pioneering, now defunct software company New England Digital.

**PeoPle will call
[white River Junction]
home. THEY HAVEN'T DONE
THAT SINCE 1910.**
DAVID BRIGGS

"It was an unimpressive bit of a building, and it didn't really have any street presence. ... But a building of that size, it was pretty expensive, but it needed millions of dollars of work."

After chatting out a series of financial projections on the property, Busy was convinced it was a sound investment. Upon purchasing it, he decided to renovate the exterior. First, through rehabilitating the property's curb appeal.

Busy held an open house at the property in December 2001, not expecting much response. "Seven hundred people showed up. It was crazy," he says. That very day, Busy chalkmarked the floors of the Tip Top Media and Arts Building, as it has since been rechristened, to denote the



David Brigg, owner of White River Junction

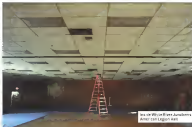
legends of its rental spaces. The whole place was rented out within three weeks. It is an well-ventilated, and is a diverse array of tenants. The Tip Top's 51 spaces include, among the rest, a public-access TV station, a puppet-making, massage therapists, a ballet studio, and numerous printers and copy shops. Though most is a small space there too — the old one not used all these new traditional businesses, former state senator and nearby resident Matt Dwyer is the company's director of community affairs. Busy's one office is in the Tip Top, as well.

The Tip Top is Busy's flagship project, and as such is White River's icon. It's anchored by the Tip Top Cafe, as well as a Greek American bistro with a lively menu. Along with another restaurant, Klean, just across the street from the Legion hall, the cafe is one of the local businesses that have helped White River transcend itself from a "third-class" town to a destination.

Busy's next project, dubbed the Greenback Building, has less ambience in name, but its occupants are equally varied. They include a yoga studio, a floral supply company and a vintage workshop. Its park decks and entrance spaces welcome well-dressed from the holidays on either side of it, a design decision that suggests Busy is sensitive to the village's past.

Still, he says he's "not a huge history buff" — that is, he's not afraid to lay a path for the future without relying on the past. "I have no trouble with my memorial tree or even celebrating the past. I think that's great," Busy says. "But in my opinion, I'm not infinitely a future thinker. I'm much more interested in what still happens in 20 or 25 years."

The impulse is reflected in his desire for the American Leg in White River, which Busy is planning something quite different from his previous projects: a mix of commercial and residential mixed spaces. "I don't want to keep catering to the creative energy that's there," really building a downtown," he says. "But the thing that's missing, especially on South Main Street, is quality housing. ... All of [residential needs], here



White River Junction building under renovation

home here were done. There's nothing like a modern apartment building downtown."

Busy's art is among these in that it benefits from downtown housing. The Legion building is across the street from the school, and its small, affordable apartments would be well suited for students like James Starns, co-founder of CCOR, an entrepreneur about the project. "We've had three or four other developers contact us about wanting to build homes," he says, "but we're not in the same business. As a school, we can't do that. ... Here's the thing about Matt: He's an if you build it, they will come sort of guy."

David Briggs has lived in White River Junction nearly all his life. The landlord and developer of several key properties here — including the Hotel Cordage and the Legion Open House, where Northern Vlogs performs — he has for decades led the charge to revitalize his hometown. Briggs was one of several forward-thinking residents who, as early as the 1970s, embraced the concepts of "new" and "downstream revival action" upon the conversion about White River's future.

It is concerned that Busy has no — should have — the village's best work for change. "Busy makes us. It's a total misconception," Briggs says. "I've studied [Busy's work] and the completeness of the process of White River being re-stored. ... You'd have to be kind of crazy not to embrace it to the max."

For Briggs, one of the chief problems over the last century of White River's economic history is that business owners had no connection to the village itself. They lived elsewhere and, where they were closer, they simply held their employees, earned off the left and left town.

Briggs believes that having better residential options is more — such as those Busy is preparing for the Legion hall — will reverse that course. "People will call [White River Junction] home. They haven't done that since 1920."

While the plans for the Legion building are not yet certain, Busy is considering

several nontraditional options, one of which is to turn part of the building's first floor into a "coworking hub." He envisions a small open space surrounded by small, glassed-in private offices, each of which could be rented on a short-term basis by, for instance, freelance writers or students at the campus school.

The second floor would hold the 20 small apartments that Busy estimates the space could support. Above that, on the 11,000-square-foot roof, he hopes to — well, solar panels. These, along with extra insulation and the ultra-efficient heating system, could enable the building to operate at near net-zero energy levels.

Busy hopes to complete the permitting process by February 2016 and to begin construction by March or April. He's already fielding calls from contractors who think that work to lead on the project.

Law Hirsch, director of planning and development for the town of Hartford, says "The potential is so visible" in the Legion building. "The thing about Matt is that he comes up with great projects," she says. "There's no question in my mind that he'd do something that's going to make a contribution to the downtown."

Creative Community

Kim Parker, owner of a local insurance agency and a member of the Hartford Board of Aldermen, has lived in White River Junction nearly all his life. This is a thoughtful, unassuming individual who has had a long association and sensitivity in supporting a couple of old structures in town. For that, I think he's certainly done a lot of good for his business and his life in the town.

Parker also praises Busy's efforts to cultivate an artistic community in White River Junction, noting that the Tip Top Building, for example, now hosts "an art show every three or four months."

Perhaps the cornerstone of that artistic community is the Main Street Museum,



HERE'S THE THING ABOUT MATE:
HE'S AN "IF YOU BUILD IT,
THEY WILL COME"
SORT OF GUY.
JAMES STURM

Founded in 1992 by David Fairbanks Ford, blending with vintage ephemera, such as dog-eared *Playboys*, pop-culture detritus and *Time* magazine, the museum playfully challenges the very notion of what constitutes "proper" art.

Ford was one of the first people to contact Lucy about securing studio space in the Hartford Woolen Mill. Soon after their meeting, the two began dating, as Ford puts it, "We were the only two guys in town." They were a couple until about 1997 and remain good friends.

Ford is as enthusiastic as anyone about the last two decades of change in White River Junction, he doesn't retain a fondness for the village's past. "I kind of loved the town when [he] was aged," he says, "because it was slower and denser and out" life recalls a moment when he and Lucy, walking down South Main Street, heard a scream and looked up to see a television set flying out of a second-story window. "That's local color," he says.

Ford, though an artist himself, is concerned that the creative economy may prove unsustainable. "Someone who is out of work and living in a crumbling apartment — how do they benefit from [the local arts scene]?" he asks.

He notes that local artists and artisans spend a lot of money in town. They help support restaurants, local shops and landlords. Yet, as artists, they are not likely to be on the path to great wealth. "We've got to figure out on our society how we're going to fund people who are doing this work," Ford says.

Sturm is more optimistic about fostering White River Junction's artistic community. "What choice does the town have?" he asks. "It's not going to be a retail giant, being on the New Hampshire border" — referring to that state's lack of a sales tax. "We had a downtown life. So we chose with all these holes in it, with underdeveloped infrastructure. That's great for the arts."

Several local ventures may sugar the convergence of White River's artistic and business communities. One of these is Scavenger Gallery, a boutique opened by acclaimed jewelry designer Steve Hopkins; another is Revolution, an upcycled-clothing store run by Kim Soares. Both businesses are right downtown, and both sell stylish, well-designed goods to customers with discerning eyes.

Initially, Hopkins wasn't sure that her high-end jewelry would find buyers in White River. "But it's been working" she says. "We're creating a really desirable of people who tell their friends about us — I feel pretty confident that [White River] is moving in a direction that's good for artists."

Sturm concurs. "Even though I'm running a commercial retail store," she says, "I'm showcasing a number of artists — I didn't want to go into retail for the sake of retail. I don't even care about retail."

Another local artist who has found great success in business is Lucy himself. Never mind his commercial ventures, he doesn't even call himself a real estate developer. His business card reads, "Meet Lucy Filmaker and Director of Photography."

Lucy has been out of town a lot lately, shooting a film project in Connecticut. With the help of his sales employee, Jacob Galley, and his ever-present iPhone, he keeps tabs on his business even when away from White River.

"Filmaking is not unlike building development," Lucy says. "In terms of the number of people involved, the schedules, the hierarchy, that exists — it's very similar. Having a general contractor totally prepared me for being on a film set."

One of his upcoming projects, in fact, demonstrates how Lucy himself embodies the convergence implicit in the term "creative economy." In the months before the American Legion renovations get under way, Lucy will use the place as a stage for a planned web series about a young woman who is magically able to communicate across time with her grandmother — who just happens to be Andy Warhol.

"I still don't really know what the creative economy is," Lucy says. "It was in a conference about it, and I'm still not clear on it. I think it just means entrepreneurs doing creative stuff on their own, the power of the indie person. And it doesn't make me as anything new."

Even so, since Matt Lucy has been weaving in it, there's a great deal of the new in White River Junction. ☐



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***SEVEN DAYS**
 will not be published
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Strongman Santa

A pro-wrestling legend has a soft spot for the holidays

BY ALICIA IVINS

An elementary school-age brother and sister have been waiting for Santa Claus for an hour. They arrived at the Berlin Mall at around 11 a.m., decked out in red and white hats and ready to reveal their wishes to the big man. He finally arrives at noon, pushing a shopping cart filled with presents.

With the boy and girl both sitting on his lap, Santa asks the children if they know how to get what they want for Christmas. "So good?" asks the girl.

"Yes," Santa confirms. "And no fighting. And not just around Christmas. All year."

Clearly, this Santa has a rule as strict as any, not as if he's police. The man beneath the beard is 76-year-old Paul "the Butcher" Vachon.

From the late 1950s until the 1980s, Vachon traveled the world to compete in the squared circle. He was inducted into the Professional Wrestling Hall of Fame in 2006, along with his elder brother, Maurice "Wild Dog" Vachon (who passed away on November 21 at the age of 84). The two were recognized for their legendary "Steel" (bad guy) tag team.

But now Vachon is working "babyface" (good guy). In fact, he's playing the character Yogi jolly old Saint Nick.

Vachon, a native of Glen Sutton, Quebec, just across the border from Richmond, returned home to Route 305 when he retired from wrestling in 1987. Now, he lives much of the year in Newport with his fourth wife, Dix. He also travels the country selling signed photos and his four self-published autobiographies, along with jewelry and knickknacks. In November, that means hitting fairs and festivals all over Vermont.

Every October, Vachon starts his run at the Berlin Mall. Through the holidays, he works with Brenda and Bob Smith, owners of Northfield-based Sander's Candies, to stay close to his uncommon day job.

How did the tough guy become Nice Nick? It all began 13 years ago with a second Santa, says Vachon. "I was acting up my stuff here [at the mall] and he showed up drunk. He was shoving all sorts and finally he fell off the chair," he recalls.

The other Santa was fired on the spot, and the mall manager asked Vachon to take over. He agreed to do so in exchange for his black's metal furs and with the



Paul Vachon with Emma Peterson and his island in St. Albans.

speculation that he would not wear the same suit this previous time he had called.

Vachon got a new suit for his a career in the biggest. "They pay me quite a bit more now," he says with a grin.

Vachon begins his days in the Saturday, grunting furs at his booth just down the hall from Walmart. But, about 120 minutes before noon, he commences his broader mission. His own beard is still dark, so he covers it with a false one that matches the white eyebrows that shade his steel blue

eyes. The 6-foot-11 former athlete is no longer the 280 pounds of his heyday, but no stuffing is required to fill out the suit, even if Vachon is far from looking like a bowl full of jelly.

Years of taking bumps in the ring have left Vachon's neck "all screwed up," he says. To get from his changing area to his booth to chair, he employs a shopping cart stuffed with poop presents as a roller.

While people come to him with all kinds of Christmas wishes, the wrestler himself says he's happier just to be alone

After treating colon cancer in the early '90s, Vachon has had up with three colonoscopies treatments for the latter left his gut weakened to the point of needing replacement. More recently, Vachon traveled to Montreal to receive a replacement valve to fix a heart issue. He's living with diabetes, so he makes sure always to have a peanut butter and jelly sandwich handy to keep his blood sugar stable.

All this has left Vachon's French-accented growl a bit lacking, as if clouded by pain, but the kids don't seem to mind.

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VACHON IS PLAYING THE ULTIMATE BABYFACE: JULY OLD SAINT NICK.

And neither does the weather as he looks back on his career. "If I had known when I first started out that I was going to wind up like this, I would have done it anyway," he says.

The first seeds of Vachon's wrestling aspirations were planted in Hildford, he says. His brother, Maurice, was already wrestling professionally, but Paul had never seen him on television. At 12 or 13 he crossed the border to see a Western double feature at the movies. "I was standing on the corner waiting for the theater to open," recalls Paul Vachon. "On a round screen, black-and-white TV, I saw my brother... something I was mesmerized [and thought], When I grow up and get as big as [Maurice], I'm gonna be a wrestler too!"

Paul Vachon followed through by winning silver at the Canadian amateur national championships at age 17 that his celebration was not long-lived. Maurice, who was eight years older, told him, "You're never gonna make money that way. We're turning pro this summer."

So Vachon followed in his brother's footsteps. Having a relative in the business didn't give him any major advantages, though, until 1962, when Maurice asked Paul to come for him on an Asian tour. While his elder brother stayed in Hawaii, Vachon traveled in Japan and India, then Africa. The younger wrestler didn't return to North America for four years.

In the meantime, Maurice Vachon adopted the name "Mad Dog," which turned out to be his lucky break. His younger brother recalls him saying, "Ever since I became Mad Dog, I've been making nothing but money. I had a chance at the world championship."

Maurice thought his brother needed a more impressive name, so after floating the idea of "Gochon Vachon" — "go Vachon" in English — they settled on "The Butcher of Paris" to capitalize on Vachon's thoroughly un-French French-Canadian accent. The "of Paris" part of the sobriquet faded away after a few months. But today, when parents bring their children to see Santa, many still address Vachon in covert whispers as "the Butcher."

Other fans, including Vachon's long-time workday ally, Linda Perkins, remember seeing him perform at Burlington's Memorial Auditorium, or in Rutland or St. Albans. Children of the 1960s are more likely to recall his groundbreaking TV "wedding" on a 1966 episode of *WWF's* (then *WWF*) "Tuesday Night Tension."

The show was originally planned as a real wedding for Vachon and his fiancée at Madison Square Garden. But when she broke the engagement, *WWF* head Vince McMahon Jr. decided to substitute a lengthy wrestling match, an early stab at the soap-for-men genre he would create on the *USA Network*. Audiences watched a scripted narrative in which "Captain Lou" Albano objected to the marriage until he found out the bride wasn't a virgin — all leading to a massive, money-ruled fight. Vachon ducked out of that battle early, he remembers. "I had my brand-new suit. I knew to stay out of the way."

Of course, Vachon's biggest fans today leave him far a different, not exactly Perkins says that numerous parents have told stories of bringing their kids to see other Ken Kringles, only to get requests to go back to the Berkus Mall and see "the real Santa."

And, though Perkins says she has to help keep Santa awake during sleep times, Vachon says he relishes hearing kids' gift requests.

"I love the kids," says the father of seven. "[When I first started], I just didn't think I was gonna like it, but I do."

In the past 13 years, fans of Santa and Butcher Vachon alike have sat on the same man's knee during the holidays. And whether it's the 62-year-old grandmother, the 46-hour-old infant or grandchildren of pups, everyone who crosses the man's path leaves with a dose of good cheer. ☺

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The Seven Days Gift Guide

PART 3: INDOOR/OUTDOOR

Action, shoppers! That conglomerate of events we include only call "the holidays" wraps us — not to mention the birthday of my friends or family members who share December with the

baby Jesus. That means it's time to get crackin' with the cash, credit cards and charitable donations.

Closing gifts can be hard, but not to worry: *Seven Days* editorial staff is here to help. This year we decided

simply to share our own wish lists — with a *de*cent theme for each of the remaining months of 2011. This time, it's "Indoor/Outdoor" — digital analog or physical. So let's get started. ☺

I never learned how to ride a real bike, but lately, I've been spinning a lot on the stationary wheels. Chosen at an average of 450 to 600 calories burned per class attracted me to Boulder's RISE Cycling Studio, but it's the post-ride high and the set list — ranging from Cold to grunge to Broadway — that have kept me in the sweaty rotation. I'd like more **SPINNING CLASSES**, please \$915 per ride risevibe.com

ALICE LEWITT

What better gift to a fellow holiday musician, or in my current Monday mood, than **SESSIONS AT UPPER MERLEY YOGA** — three 90-minute classes over an hour. Teacher Angie Riddlemeier still leads a class as noted for all children Mondays 5:30 to 7 p.m. This class is free, so bring guitar music from her husband Jason, that ribs and flexes with the rhythms of his other vintage sequencers. \$90 for six classes, \$16 drop-in uppermerleyyoga.com

JEFF GOOD

I've already outlined my wish list for the **FULL-MOON SKI-AND-SING EVENTS** this winter at Blueberry 360 Inn (January 10 and February 10). A \$10 ticket buys a soup, starch and a goodie, 30 kilometers from the Silver Bullet Nordic Center. Ropes to Blueberry Hill — a white, open area, a four-minute descent and Vermont's classic board will a sweet

me. This would make the perfect gift for any cross-country ski enthusiast. Visit blueberryhills.com

KATHYNN FLAGG

I want to run a book of records for the spring, but the *one* quite a few dark, cold months before then, and I can already feel myself getting lay. Running in the water isn't about motivation. The friend — it's about eliminating excuses not to do it. I can't stand the cranky feeling of a headlamp pressed against my face, and vests are too bulky that a clip on **STROBE LIGHT** will keep me safe while running through the streets at night without disrupting my [personal] stride. \$100 at City Sports and Bicycles

MARK DAVIS

I'd like to take advantage of that blustery north wind coming off Lake Champlain and cruise, wind powered, across the snow covered water. Northshore Ski and Surf out Albany Bay sells new and used kitesurfing equipment — a **STARTER POWER KITE**, starts at \$16, a good controller at about \$100 — and also a 5m kite to help you learn the art for \$150/hour. I've found you can really get moving wearing a pair of skis. And after I master riding on ice and snow, making the transition to 140 next summer should be a breeze. startvibe.com

KEVIN PICARD

My wish is for a vintage **PHOENIX-PRIMA CAMERA**. Digital photography is quick and it's effective for the focused photos I take, but sometimes I want to create modern stills with the crafted beauty of medium or large format prints. Vermont Camera Works sells a rotating inventory of old cameras, from an Omega View 55D to a Baby Bellini on Film \$200 vermontcamera.com



CORIN HIRSH

I'm quite glad of 6 sailing seasons not to like to wading during winter. The days are shorter, so visibility is lower. The weather is crabbier, meaning you and salt end up all over my grill. And finally it seems inevitable. To cross that last excuse of the last,

I'm going the helmet-computer. **40PPH CAP** by White River Junction based then on my web last this year. Three weeks, memo: wool earflaps \$40 shop.dica.com

CHARLES EICHACKER

Years ago I was obsessed with **BACKGAMMON**. But it's been so long now, I've almost forgotten how to play. What was that Crawford rule again? Time to hone up for some rough and winter evening games with a good friend. And I'd like to play on a beautiful, handmade board with solid wood. \$180 at Stone Craft Design. stonecraft.com

PAMELA POLSTON

I refer to my current bicycle as a "mule." It's heavy and creaky, but it does get me where I want to go. A little rough-road, gearless is my cycling life would be most welcome if I had room in my



like budget, but pick up a **BAHAMA "No. 4"** — a smooth, durable and very stylish ride that would probably be the last bike I'd ever buy like it. I assure you who wants to "surprise" me, I won't mind. Bikes start at \$2400. budz2cycles.com



ETHAN DE SERE

Stuck season is the worst I've got something outdoors to do every month of the year except that brief period of time in late fall and early winter when the months have tied up but there's not enough snow to justify snowshoes. That's why I desperately need a pair of micro-sprockets. I'll take a pair of **KAYTOLA MICROSPRINGS ICE SKIDERS** (\$64.95) or some **FACTORY STICKS** (\$39.95) but whatever you do, don't unleash me with a credit card in Outdoor Gear Exchange to decide for myself.

PAUL HEINTZ

Some people just love snow closing. Not me. I need motivation to get out there and run, and that's what podcasts are for. But while I'm listening to "Welcome to Night Vale," my iPhone is getting snowed and drained on, which is why this year I voted for the **NEW SPURLOCK ARMBAUGH**. It's like my previous device, sleek and accessible while I toil around the truck waiting for summer to return. \$24.99. Available at Small Dog Electronics. smalldog.com

MARGOT HARRISON

As a BBQ enthusiast, I will grill in any season, in any weather

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DAN BOLLES

WTF I got depressed from Vermont if I admit that I'm not outdoorsy at all. I'm sure snowshoeing or whatever is fun, but putting on two dozen layers to trudge around in 15-degree weather isn't my idea. I'm perfectly content to stay curled up under a blanket. That's why I could use an **IPAD AIR**. The latest device cracked out by Apple's since is lighter than ever and paper-thin — perfect for reading books, watching videos and browsing the web from the comfort of my couch. Now, pass the hot chocolate and call me in April. Starting at \$249.99 at Small Dog Electronics. smalldog.com

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Vermont's Best Bud

Meet the man who ensures one dispensary's pot is high grade and ready to roll

BY KEN PACE

A few months ago, Mark Tucci was smoking a joint of Chushead, a strain of marijuana he'd never tried before. Tucci says he's probably smoked three or four joints a day for the last decade, so there aren't many kinds he hasn't tried. It reminds some of his friends—including God Bud, AK-47, THT and Train Wreck, all of which are "kick-ass heavy" indica strains—Chushead is a sure, known more for its energy-giving than pain-relieving properties, and it didn't do much for him.

Still, Tucci doesn't complain. It's his job to sample every strain of medical marijuana grown by the Vermont House of Representatives, the state-funded nonprofit dispensary in Montpelier. Before each strain is distributed to patients, he reports back to the staff on how it performed, informing them not only about its look, feel, taste, smell and potency, but also how it affected his body and his mood.

In all, Tucci has smoked or eaten more than 30 marijuana strains for the dispensary, providing staff with advice and suggestions from himself and dozens of other patients on the state's medical marijuana program. He has also acquired, from his vast nationwide network of patients and caregivers, more of the seeds, clones and cuttings the dispensary now uses to grow its plants. But Tucci, who turns 57 this month, it's by far the most exciting gig of his life.

But, before anyone turns green with envy, it's worth keeping a few points in mind. First, Tucci earned his current job—technically, he's an independent consultant—only after years of fighting for Vermonters' right to grow, possess and consume cannabis for their chronic, debilitating and often life-threatening conditions.

There's another reason why most people wouldn't make planet with him: Since his diagnosis with multiple sclerosis in 1994, Tucci's condition has steadily worsened. Although he estimates that his daily cannabis use has given him an additional seven years of mobility, his doctor says it's only a matter of time before the degenerative disease gets the better of him.



IN THE MORNING WHEN I WAKE UP THROBBING AND SPASMING, I need a kick-ass Indica, a skunk or an indica, to break down my pain.

Mark K. Tucci

"Last year I went to work, stood up out of the wheelchair in front of my car and couldn't move my legs," Tucci recalls. "They say I've got maybe six to eight months of functioning left."

And then what? "I'll be JELL-O guy, lying up here [in his hospital] in a nursing home."

In the meantime, Tucci, who currently lives independently in a cabin in southern Vermont, plans to work for as long as he can toward a single goal: to ensure that Vermont's marijuana dispensary patients have the best medicine money can buy. To that end, he has largely eschewed taking any "real cannabis" made to treat his symptoms so he won't corrupt his research

On Washington County physicians who serve on the board of the Vermont Patients Alliance says that Tucci is giving the dispensary an invaluable service by doing the gap between science and anecdotal evidence. The dispensary's goal of the art laboratory supplies the former. It has a gas chromatograph for testing the plants for their spectra of cannabinoids, or active compounds, and a dissecting microscope for examining them for mold, mites and other parasites. What was missing, until Tucci came on board, was someone who could provide the patients' subjective perspective—on how well the marijuana actually works.

"As physicians, we want scientific research and evidence," says the physician who asked that his name and employer not be identified owing to the legal and public relations complications that still surround medical marijuana. "When I started, Myra Squibb is studying a new drug for Alzheimer's, they're spending \$2 billion on clinical testing at 50 or 100 different hospitals worldwide. That's the kind of evidence doctors are used to, not a few patients on one state. But the kind of evidence we'd like to have just doesn't exist yet."

Nor is it likely to appear in the foreseeable future. As this doctor points out, the most rigorous type of drug testing conducted in the United States are funded by either the pharmaceutical industry or the federal government, neither of which has shown any interest in furthering this particular body of medical research.

In the absence of such evidence, physicians like this one have turned to the relatively few high-quality peer-reviewed articles about medical marijuana treatment that are based on randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled studies of the kind used in approving conventional medicines.

But even their scope is limited. When it comes to knowing precisely which cannabis strain is recommended to patients, for which symptoms and in what quantities, this physician says, "There is no doing chart." There are more standards for oil and water testing.

Hence the work Tucci performs, as both patient liaison and adviser, functions as a

sort of informal clinical trial. Patients trust Tucci because he's one of their own and has years of firsthand experience to draw from. He authored the medical marijuana patient survey, which was released last year by the Vermont Department of Public Safety. Those patients, in turn, advise Tucci about how each strain performs for them, so he can recommend new strains or hybrids for the dispensary to acquire.





HEALTH

"For years we were told we were crazy by doctors," Tucci says. "We were told that cannabis had no medical value and [that] if you used it as medicine, you were a drug addict or self-medicating for depression... and [that] anecdotal evidence had no value at all. But it does."

The flow of information goes both ways. Recently, for example, Tucci learned from the dispensary's chemist that there's

a scientific reason why the Greenhead strain didn't do much for his pain or muscle spasms: A gas chromatography analysis revealed it's high in delta-8-tetrahydrocannabinol, one of the more than 70 unique cannabinoids in marijuana. As the dispensary's expert pointed out to Tucci, he's had similar bad experiences

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with other strains containing high levels of delta-8 THC, which he now avoids.

"Who the hell would know that just from smoking weed?" Tucci asks. "No one!"

Tucci didn't seek out this job—at least he didn't, largely because of all the work he's done as the past or, in behalf of Vermont's medical marijuana community. As *Newsday* described in a May 6, 2009, cover story about him, "Glowing Legit" Tucci was an instrumental in the passage of Vermont's first medical-marijuana law in 2004.

Three years later, he lobbied the legislature to expand the scope of the law to allow more patients and conditions to qualify for the state-run registry, and to allow patients to possess more plants and processed weed in cases their plants died or got contaminated by mold or insects.

Later, when it became clear that many medical-marijuana patients were either too poor to afford to grow their own or too fearful about going to the black market to buy medicine of unknown source and potency, Tucci pushed for the passage of Act 165. That law, signed by Gov. Peter Shumlin in May 2010, allowed for the creation of up to four state licensed medical-marijuana dispensaries in Vermont. Those are up and running today; the fourth is due to open sometime next year.

Over the years, Tucci has helped his friends, if not thousands, of Vermonters cultivate their own medicinal plants. His 2006 self-published book, *The Patient's Simple Guide to Growing Medical Marijuana*, is still the bible of Vermont's DIY pot patients and their occasional caregivers. And, despite his own physical incapacity, Tucci still helps educate and advise patients who, for a variety of reasons, have opted to grow their own rather than sign up with a dispensary.

Members of the Montpelier dispensary approached Tucci about his own medical history and opened up to him, seeking his expertise. At that point, the dispensary had already gone through the state's rigorous application process, which had included providing the Vermont Department of Public Safety with its detailed business and security plans—and \$22,500 in nonrefundable application and licensing fees. The business plan called for someone to serve as a patient liaison. Tucci was the obvious first choice.

How, then, Tucci go about his work? Because he suffers from neuropathic pain, which is treated by different types of pain control, he says he'll take a pain and consider it exclusively for about two days, at different times of day, to see how it affects his condition. After that, he tries incorporating the strain into his usual regimen and seeing how it works.

"In the morning when I wake up, thrashing and spasming. I need a kick out



both relieve pain and improve their overall mental attitude about their miserable conditions," Tucci says. "Because that's really important, too."

Victory is also crucial, Tucci adds, because patients can quickly develop a tolerance to one particular strain, rendering it less effective. He tells patients to vary their kinds and keep track of which work best and at which times of day. When a patient asks he advice on a condition with which he's unfamiliar, Tucci has friends in the medical-marijuana community across the country to whom he can turn for advice—or more. If there's a particularly beneficial strain, that the dispensary doesn't carry yet, for instance, Tucci can usually track it down and get someone to donate seeds or cuttings.

Another important aspect of Tucci's job is providing emotional and moral support to patients who may have little or no prior experience with marijuana. He recalls the story of a woman in her seventies who had end-stage breast cancer and couldn't eat anything but this soup. As he recalls, the woman was reluctant to try marijuana, but her doctor had suggested as a way of boosting her appetite. Her fears weren't allayed by her doctor's assurance about marijuana's outstanding safety profile compared with the antibiotics and opioids she was taking, which are lethal in high doses, or by insurance that it wouldn't interact with those meds.

Tucci recalls, "I had to say, 'Good God, honey! What are you afraid of? You're dying!'"

Eventually, Tucci convinced the woman to "just treat it like any other meal." Within five hours, she ate one or three less, he estimated, then wait 10 minutes and see if it makes a difference. It did.

"Her husband does not get up because a few weeks later with the biggest smile on his face," Tucci recalls. "He says, 'You're not going to believe it. She's eating again.' Some of the things people say reminds me of them, even I don't believe it."

Tucci includes patients of men and women and Chuck and Cheryl, who he's known since he lobbied for the compassionate treatment of the disabled and terminally ill, many of whom have since died. Each strain has its own mind-blowing high.

And, all weed knows about: he's still willing to answer a burning question: "Do you ever get high when you smoke?"

"Sure," now and then—thank you, Jesus—though he'd be a little bit more modest in a while, and if it gets up and down and feel good about life," he says with a smile. But, he's ready to stand up and state these moments are rare and fleeting.

How much longer will Vermont's medical marijuana patients see 393113 be able to continue his work?

"I do not know that, I don't know," Tucci says, shaking his head as he sits in his wheelchair. "As long as I think I'm doing some good." ☺

WHAT WAS MISSING, UNTIL TUCCI CAME ON BOARD, was someone who could provide the patients' subjective perspective on how well the marijuana actually works.

India, a Black or an AK, to break down my pain," he says. "In the afternoon, when I'm trying to function and I just want to get through the day, I smoke [citra/indica] blend, some Black or American Home, so I feel some general relief of benefits, but also it doesn't knock me out."

At night, Tucci turns to the heavier indica. "I sleep better and don't go to the bathroom a hundred times during the night," he says.

This is, in part, to Tucci's work, the dispensary now carries what he calls "single strains"—five basic varieties that come in smokeable form, such as buds and hashish, as well as tinctures and edibles. So, for instance, if a patient finds the strain called Train Wreck effective but doesn't like to smoke in the morning, he or she can eat a cookie or put a drop of

the tincture under the tongue. Having options is crucial, Tucci explains, as patients often have to manage many different symptoms throughout their day.

"It's like providing paint," he says. "Nobody ever thinks to pencil until they become a pencil [pencil/pencil] and rolling a paint takes 20 minutes. It's huge part to have those pencils ready for you."

Some patients react differently to different strains. Tucci advises them on how to manage and define their own comfort zone. He can help identify strains based on properties such as high content of cannabidiol, a cannabinoid known for controlling pain and other symptoms without producing a "high." He says these strains are good for children, old people and others who don't want the mind-altering psychoactive effects. Others, he says, prefer strains that

JAMES HAMILTON

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Christmas Spirit

Theater review: Irving Berlin's *White Christmas*, Northern Stage

BY KRIS EARNJOST



For most celebrants, the Christmas holiday revolves around family traditions such as mailed cards, or singing carols burned as children. For others, it's about listening to the First Night story or *A Christmas Carol*, or watching for the umpteenth time the 1954 film *It's a Wonderful Life*.

The holiday musical *Irving Berlin's White Christmas*, currently running at Northern Stage in White River Junction, brings all these good feelings together after absorbing two hours of happy song and dance and storytelling, it's hard not to feel all warm and fuzzy.

The show begins with the song "White Christmas" as it brings comfort to a ragged group of World War II soldiers trying to celebrate the holiday somewhere near a dark battlefield. Berlin wrote it for his 1942 movie musical *Holiday Inn*. The movie was a minor hit but the song was a major one, topping the *Billboard* charts and winning an Academy Award that year.

Within a decade of its instant success, "White Christmas" became the centerpiece of a new Irving Berlin movie musical of the same name. *White Christmas* starred Bing Crosby and Danny Kaye as the popular song-and-dance team of Bob Wallace and Phil Davis. This time the film itself was a hit, and it soon became a holiday classic.

The basic plot of the movie, as well as of the 2004 Broadway musical version, follows Wallace and Davis as they meet and fall in love with the singing, dancing Hyman sisters, Betty and Judy. The

girls are heading to the Pine Tree Inn in Vermont to perform for the holidays. The boys follow and discover that their old Army commander, Gen. Waverly (played by veteran TV actor Kenneth Korotkin), is the owner of the financially failing inn. In a plot device as old as the Vermont hills, they decide to put on a show to help "the old man."

The rest is predictable. Boys get girls, lose their girls, boys get girls back — singing and dancing along the way that the clichés are delivered in such an entertaining way that both the music and theatrical versions have become seasonal staples. Irving Berlin's *White Christmas* is that a perfect candidate for Northern Stage's longstanding tradition of producing a big, happy family-friendly musical every December.

The film and Broadway versions differ; the latter changes the plot treats a bit, yet nothing is lost in translation. Only one song is missing along with Danny Kaye's rubber-legged gymnastics while taking that his foot is asleep.

Conceptually, the additions to the stage play are more characters and more Berlin songs, including a great nightclub rendition of "Billie Jean" (in the Northern Stage production, Alexeych as Wallace delivers the song). Sinatra-style, and the budding dancers are a home and a half.

Two lesser-known Berlin songs, "Let Me Sing and Be Happy" and "Falling Out of Love Can Be Fun," both feature the expanded character of Martha Winters, here played energetically by Susan Fletcher. Martha, the general's personal assistant and overboard operator who quickly carries a torch for him, is an ex-Broadway

performer with a big, husky voice (think Martha Raye). Fletcher and her character are welcome additions to this show.

It's hard to put aside comparisons to Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye, Rosemary Clooney and Vera-Elton from the film. But fortunately, *White* and *Real* Broadway look nothing like Crosby and Kaye, and they've created their own personas for the characters. *White* is darkly handsome and brings a smoldering, moody quality to Wallace that suits both the world-weary and tender dancer-playboy who seems to have all the moves, both on the dance floor and in his casual efforts with the Hyman girls.

Paired with Katherine Peterson as Hyman, Bradley shows his character's hesitancy as he struggles to get up his womanizing ways (in scenes with a couple of dirty dancers on a tent in the women's room scenes, Bradley's encouragement, then controls himself for Judy).



Martha Winters and Bob Wallace

Papacostas is a like, expressive dancer who really brings her character into her dances. Her first dance with Bradley, to the tune of "The Best Things Happen While You're Dancing" is a highlight of the first act, the partners beautifully work their way through movement styles as well as emotions. Their eye contact and expression while doing so convey their growing attraction to each other. July pushes and pulls herself toward or away from Phil, often pausing and more so if to reconsider her choice.

Sybil and Scotty Bono (Scotty Haynes) are also well cast and have excellent chemistry. Bono's voice is the equal of Sybil's, and they harmonize nicely, building emotion both in and outside their songs. Only once does Bono let the strength of her voice and her use of the currently popular powerhouse singing style — a la "American Idol" — get in the way of an otherwise flawless performance. In an obscure torch song "Love, You Didn't Do Right By Me," Bono relays too much on belting and not enough on emotional modulations.

A musical is nothing without dancing, and choreographer Keith Coughlin brings out the best in his capable dancers during featured encores as well as in difficult, synchronized numbers, such as the Act II opener, "I Love a Piano." The whole eighth-meet-her dance, along with July and Phil, put on their top shoes and do outstanding ensemble work with speed and finesse.

It is easy to grow grinning the delightful, well-crafted production of *White Christmas* (Director Carol Drougas has used excellent use of the stage and limited cast. For example, before Bob and Betty meet, they share a sweet duet on "Love and the Weather." They foreshadow their meeting and reveal their similar attitudes as they sing about their reluctance to romance from opposite sides of a dressing room mirror.

The one exception to Drougas' judicious management comes near the end of the show when Gen. Winfrey is presented to all his past soldiers, who have come to Vermont to surprise him. It's a moving moment here, while the film had them arrive in uniform here the general is alone on a bare stage. Winfrey's presence is strong, but there are no props, lighting effects, recorded voices or any other theater "magic" to give a sense of the crowd, sensually surrounding him.

Singing the best for last is truly when re-viewing a quality production such as this one, but the Broadway musical version adds two more characters that are a definite bonus. In the hands of a gifted comic star like Scott Coste, both are downright joyful. Coste reveals his full range in delivering the sferzoso, over-the-top TV producer and the taciturn, money-phobic Vermont Yankee. Both are memorable performers, only disrupted by the contrast between the two Coste's sense of timing is impeccable, and he brings maximum humor from the pause and drawl of a Vermont "y-yuh." It may be particularly funny to a New England audience, but Coste's performance alone is nearly worth the price of admission.

Irving Berlin's *White Christmas* is worth adding to your holiday tradition — if this run at Northern Stage is not already sold out. ☐

INFO

Irving Berlin's *White Christmas*, directed by Carol Drougas, choreographed by Keith Coughlin, produced by Northern Stage. Wednesday through Sunday, December 11 to 15, 7:00 p.m. Get away and Sunday, December 14 and 15, 2 p.m. See website for other dates and times through December 31. Group/Group House White River Junction: \$10 to \$15 and back city. 250-3000, northernstage.org

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No Taste Like the Present

Uncommon local products make great gifts BY ALICE LEVITT

Chances are, it's happened to you: the experience of unwrapping a fruitcake or a garbage can of aisle, floured pastries. The well-meaning, but chaotic loved one knows you're a food lover. You nod with an awkward smile, then take a bite and frown audaciously.

But your loved ones don't have to be part of the problem. Luckily for them and you, Vermont entrepreneurs are venturing far beyond maple candy and preserves these days. We talked to the owners of four of our local food businesses to learn more about their stories and their surprising gift ideas. Even craft-minded do-it-yourselfers are bound to find something to like among their uncommon products. And if you really miss that fruitcake, you can always make one yourself.

FOR THE CULINARY TOURIST:

Wozz! Kitchen Creations, Hardwick, wozzkitchencreations.com

Ever wondered how Pierre Albert of Menace and Rupert Murdoch eat on their private parties? Wozz's "Wozz!" Dorewell knows, because he made the face himself. Dual passions for eating and cooking led him to the nomadic life of a seasonal gourmet chef. And it took serious exposure for him to realize the five-star fine he had cooked at Sydney hotels on the high seas.

"I was in a position where I had to do interesting, real food [that] sometimes it can be three months straight for me,"

explains Dorewell. "It helps to have a couple of condiments and small things prepared. These aren't my butt a little bit. They're all designed to be multiple uses and real food."

Now, Dorewell has applied that same inventiveness to his product line, Wozz! Kitchen Creations, for salins and foodstuffs. As he puts it, the

large collection is "not your traditional blueberry jam." Dorewell's wares include dressings, condiments and vinegars, all designed to be versatile in the kitchen. They're available online and at a growing number of markets and co-ops around the state, including Healthy Living, the Woodstock Farmers Market and the Northeast Kingdom Trading Center.

Take, for instance, Wozz's North African: Ghremash dressing. The aromatic combination of cumin, coriander and lemon is great on salad, but on his website, Dorewell also tells quite how to use it as a marinade, as braising liquid for lamb or folded into couscous or other meats.

Other eclectic flavors include Vietnamese green tea and mint dressing, gyoza (dumpling) dressing and Indian spiced beetroot relish. Many of the products originated when Dorewell and his wife, Aubrey, were living in Australia. When they moved to the States last year to be closer to her native New Hampshire, Dorewell decided to focus on keeping his ingredients as regional as possible.

It didn't hurt that the couple settled in Hardwick, home of the Vermont Road Vendors Center and some of the state's best farms. Despite the presence of many tropical fruits in his creations, Dorewell has largely succeeded in locating them. Even the mango paste now comes from a Maine-based company.

One group of three Australian fans never got to taste in Dorewell's sales. There wasn't much demand for sales in the Southern hemisphere, he says, but then, it's the first thing people ask me for." And it's no surprise, when the simple is so addictive in Wozz's pack of local honey salsa verde. It's a fresh taste of summer that anyone would appreciate stuffed in their stocking.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JONAS BLOOM

NO TASTE LIKE THE PRESENT 39 OF 42

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SIDEdishes

BY COYD HIRSH & ALICE LEVITT

Apples Into Gold

STAY UP STONE CIDER'S TRENDS

Last week, Vermont's Farm to Plate initiative released a report on the state's food culture, spirit and wine backbone with the words, "Vermont's contribution to the hard cider resurgence is significant."

Among the growing crop of vine or so Vermont cidemakers mentioned is a new name: Stone Cider, founded a few months ago by chemist and biologist Stefan Windler and his wife, Mary. "There's definitely a cider renaissance in America," says Windler, explaining why he chose to take on the rigors of running



STONE CIDER AND AGRI-CULTURE

a cider operation alongside his full-time job with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Stone Cider's production and tasting facilities lie two miles north of Stone Village on Route 100, in a former market and deli at 185 Packer Street. Here, the

Windlers — with their three young children in tow — ferment 500-gallon batches of cider every two weeks using apples from Champlain Orchards.

This past August, the Windlers released their flagship product: an unfavored, uncarbonated dry cider with 6.5 percent alcohol. *Groveland* (and half-size "grovelator") of the cider will so swiftly that by October the Windlers had to scale back tasting-room hours (currently Fridays and Saturdays, 4 to 6 p.m.). "It was clear it was really popular, and demand was high," Stefan Windler says.

In the next week or so, the couple will tap their next batch and reopen six days a week. In early 2009, they'll add to their line a cysar, or apple-based mead, cidem flavored with blueberries

and cranberries, and a batch that's being aged in bourbon barrels from Stagoleys' Notch Distillery.

"When you go to Europe, it's nearly one-for-one between beer and cider on taps there," says Windler. He plans to begin distributing to Stone-area restaurants and bars this spring in an effort to achieve that parity.

— C.H.

Sugarbush to Brooklyn

BENT TILBURG MAPLE PRODUCE OPENS RETAIL STORE IN PARK SLOPE

Like many midsize-scale Vermont food producers,

BENT TILBURG MAPLE PRODUCE never had much of a retail base, so that the in-store market for his maple syrup was finite. Even the creamiest and

BENT TILBURG MAPLE

Spice Route

COLLECT STUFF TO WELL-COME ARABIC MARKET

The right-level store at 70 Rosemont Highway in Colchester was long known as Neel's Ark Pet Center & Center. More recently, it was a dollar store. Now, the large storefront that shows a building with **ARABIC** is undergoing major renovation to become Vermont's first large-scale Arabic market.

Iraq native **MUHAMMAD ALKHABAZI** has lived in Vermont for three years. Though he says, "Vermont is my country now," he adds that he finds food experiences and prefers not to have to travel to big cities for his native flavors. He plans to change that by opening **ARABIC MARKET**.

The store recently received its first shipment of Middle Eastern necessities, Alkhazazi says. Hired-to-find ingredients already on the shelves include dried mulaw — popular in Egyptian soups — date preserves and fig preserves. Alkhazazi also stocks a large range of housewares, from curtains and sheets to quality seat covers of both Muslim and Christian scenes. A large meat case has waiting to be filled with halal foods.

Fruits and vegetables will also be available, and Alkhazazi says he'll have regular date-buster sales, such

as 10 lemons for \$5. He adds that his prices will generally be 30 to 80 percent lower than those of local grocery stores. "I think we can close Shaw's," jokes Alkhazazi's right-hand man and



the market's chef **LOUJ ALKHABAZI**, referring to the supermarket up the road.

An aside thanks Alkhazazi, an Iraq native who recently came to Vermont, says that in Michigan, where he previously lived, it's not uncommon for big American markets to shutter when a few cost Arabic ones open nearby. "Always the best customers I have are Americans," says Alkhazazi, who has also run a restaurant in Memphis

and the chef will be doing similar work in Colchester. The downtown section of this building is being converted into a restaurant, complete with a spot for shawarma, a terrace for baking Iraqi bread and a giant aquarium. The last

will be filled with fish that customers can choose and have cooked on the spot or bring home to prepare the meal.

Everyday menu items will also include beef, chicken and lamb kababs, shish taouk, hummus, and salads such as tabbouleh and fattoush. Alkhazazi's specialty is whole roasted lamb stuffed with rice and raisins. He hopes the

restaurant proves popular enough to serve Iraqi breakfast dishes, making three meals a day of exotic delicacies.

Alkhazazi and Alkhazazi plan to open the store within two weeks, but full approval for the restaurant is likely to take until January. The first day is sure to be a busy one. The chef plans to offer free samosas to all customers.

— A.L.



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FOR THE TREE-HUGGING SNACKER:

Squirrel Stash Nuts, Burlington,
413-423-0104 genius9.squirrelstashnuts.com

Burlington Farmers Market regulars may recognize the fresh faces of Mung Berenson and Brad Mahan, the young couple sold their wares at this year's South End Art Hop, too. But chances are, whether or not you recognize the people behind Squirrel Stash Nuts, before long you'll know the crunchy, cinnamon-caramel-glazed nuts and the unsalted almond squirrel on the logo.

Currently the 30th University of Massachusetts grads work as a nutting and an agronomer, respectively. But Mahan says the goal of their food business is to go national, or beyond. "We'd like to be coast to coast and spread the stash everywhere," he says. If their product catches on, Berenson says she'll use the money to get a nutrition degree and work in that field. Mahan plans to remain an agronomer.

For now, the two, who have known each other since they were 12, roast the almonds, cashews, peanuts and pecans themselves once a week. Customers can grab the sweet treats at the Burlington Winter Farmers Market, where Squirrel Stash is a regular vendor. The snack is also available at Healthy Living, Outdoor Gear Exchange, Sterling MotorWorks and Maple Hat Brewing Co. "We like their beer, their style and the way they present themselves," Berenson says of the brewery with which she hopes to

partner. "It's pretty close to how we want to expose our nuts."

"The nut jokes never get old," adds Mahan.

Neither does the concept of adding an organic line, one of Berenson's dreams. For now, the couple helps the South with biodegradable packaging for 4-, 8- and 16-ounce bags and a reusable tin for the sampler of all the nuts. "We want to be an example to other companies," Berenson says. "They're already proponents of good nuts."

FOR THE RUGGED FOODIE:

Lake Elmore Smokehouse, Morrisville, 888-7487
bignapierrel@gmail.com

"Everyone's got maple and regular and bear pepper. I'm a Smoke. The sweet ones chipotle chicken jerky." So says Pierre Moun, owner of Lake Elmore Smokehouse. At least, he hadn't seen any



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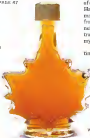
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810 BAY: MAPLE TREE PLACE BURLINGTON

SIDEdishes CONTINUED FROM PAGE 47

local beef that goes to used to sell from a Southshore food trailer were primarily snapped up by tourists, he says. "We kind of tapped out our audience" — no pun intended.

Yet, Hastings goes on, he knew there was a "great void" of direct-sourced single products in New York City, where the market supports specialty stores devoted to single items such as pickles and salt. His idea, a brick-and-mortar vinyl store, which he opened at 274 Fifth Avenue in Brooklyn's



Park Slope neighborhood this past Saturday.

"I went from a county of 20,000 people to a city of eight million," says Hastings, who also sells jams, marinades and hot sauce from some of his Vermont neighbors. The weekend's traffic at the store "exceeded my expectations," he adds.

Hastings, who splits his time between his Guilford farm and New York, says the store, *Black Bear Sugarworks*, is here-here for now, but he wanted to open in time for the holiday season. After a January closure for renovations, the store will reopen in the spring with a rustic, woody feel. "You'll believe you're in

a Vermont outbacking," Hastings says.

Hastings will add to his wares a few of the prepared foods he used to sell from his food truck, such as BLAZE with a hunk of hot dogs, maple cream cheese from KINGDOM CREAMERY OF VERMONT and maple cream sauce. He also plans to gather and sell specialty foods from producers throughout southern Vermont.

"I think there's real opportunity in New York, where people right now are looking for 'real food,'" he says.

— C M

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 Colin Hanks: @colinhanks
 Alex Levitt: @alexlevitt

until he started making it himself. The sauce could probably be used for jerky flavored with maple syrup and coconut, or with cane soda seasonings and lime.

In the summer of 2012, the Culinary Institute of America grad closed his Vermont eatery, Don Pedro's Degustare. Dejected, he recalls, Mesa returned to his country home to retool. He spent his slowed-down days exploring more of his culinary passions, including making his own jerky. Mesa also ate a lot of other people's jerky, but didn't think it compared to his own. "Some of them were so artificial," he remembers. "I was looking at them thinking, Why is there as much weird stuff in beef jerky?"

Mesa researched and began preparing what he refers to as "cowboy jerky" — meat that's cured naturally, then smoked over Vermont maple wood with no added chemicals. When Mesa began sharing his handwork with friends at a local bar, it quickly caught on, and requests to buy the beef started coming in.

Reinhardt's bar had so much buzz, Mesa worked with the Vermont Real Venture Center to gain SBA training and USDA approval. At this point, he isn't ready to mass-produce, he's just focused on turning out the five beef jerky hot-pellets. Customers will have to wait for Mesa's got jerky and bacon candy.

The Lake Placid Skunkhouse website with links to upcoming weeks. Mesa says. Until this, hungry meat lovers can order via phone or Facebook.



FOR THE SOPHISTICATED SWEET TOOTH:

**Vermont Flan Company,
Montpelier: vtfian.com**

With less than one for share of Latin American restaurants in the Green Mountains, it's not often we're lucky enough to come across flan. And, according to Vermont Flan Company owner Vanessa O'Neill, when people see her sign at the Capital City Farmers Market, they're often visibly appreciative.

"People who know it are like, 'Wow! Flan! I haven't had flan for a while,'" O'Neill says. "It's fun to see their faces when they see it."

Since she debuted the business in 2005, it's become a whole lot easier to get the smooth, creamy dessert, at least in the Montpelier area. O'Neill recently changed her packaging to sell the custards in individual hot cups that can be turned upside down to its delectable core. She uses a family recipe passed down by her Puerto Rican grandmother that results in a light, vanilla-flavored dessert.

O'Neill made her first sale at flea post after her son, Pablo, was born, now, she says, the little boy helps her prepare her product. Let's hope he doesn't help himself to too much of the cream as he adds to one of her most popular flavors.

Other varieties change with the season. Around Thanksgiving, O'Neill sold a pumpkin-spiced flan. For the colder months, the cook is working on a more traditionally Puerto Rican coconut custard.

For the full Latin experience, diners can head to O'Neill's own restaurant, *Mama's Molding Pot* in Plainfield. Hardware, for sweet treats with cups of flan. They can also take home the sweet from the famous market and Hunger Mountain and Buffalo Mountain co-ops, or indulge along with dinner at Posture Pie in Plainfield and Willy's Tavern in Randolph.

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Halfway to China

Vermont food producers cultivate the Asian market

BY CORIN HIRSCH

On a recent November afternoon, Vermont Secretary of Agriculture Chuck Ross and a small clutch of other ag officials and producers stepped out of the Hong Kong airport. They'd been on a plane for 16 hours, and a tiring, dynamic city awaited them.

But forget jetlagging. What lay ahead were nine days packed with visits to Hong Kong (population seven million), Guangzhou (eight million), Chengdu (20 million) and Shanghai (25 million). Along the way the Vermonters were scheduled to meet with Chinese importers, distributors and marketers — sometimes in their offices, often in hotel rooms. “It was almost like speed dating,” says an Alex Weiss, the Brooklyn-based director of sales for Hudson Valley Cabotian Spirits, who traveled with the group.

The mission was to make introductions for Vermont food and drink in the booming Chinese market, where wages are growing by about 10 percent each year. (The average urban Chinese worker made 24,565 yuan last year, or about \$4,045, according to numerous media outlets.) However, each Vermontor on the trip — whether marketing cheese, maple syrup or artisanal spirits — met with useful challenges. Those included China's traditional aversion to the cultural rigidity of certifying business relationships before making a sale, and geographical issues — such as where the beef is Vermont?

“Some people definitely hadn't heard of Vermont,” though they did have some sense of Italian sausage and linguine of fennel,” says Chelsea Bonet Lewis, the state's senior agricultural development coordinator, who was on the trip. “How do we tell a story in a market where Vermont doesn't have a meaning?”

China is already Vermont's third-largest international trading partner (Canada is the largest, Mexico second), state agricultural businesses sold nearly \$1.8 billion worth of goods to the Chinese in 2012, out of \$56 million to markets worldwide. Mr. Ross, Bonet Lewis and others thought the Chinese market merited a visit.

“Part of the reason to go is to a place



like China is to find markets that will generate demand for Vermont products to support this working landscape,” Ross says. “We're an export state and always have been when it comes to agricultural products. With only 626,000 people, we can't support the working landscape with just ourselves.”

The group was stewarded by Ross — who was recently elected president of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture — and Tim Hamilton, executive director of Food Report USA, Northeast, a nonprofit that promotes exports abroad, and of which Vermont is a member. Hamilton says his group has helped make inroads in the Asian market for lobster and wild blueberries, he calls himself “bullish” about promoting Vermont food products next.

Both Hamilton and Ross see the region's relative unfamiliarity with Vermont as an opportunity, especially as the Chinese become more focused on healthy food as a result of ongoing pollution and food scares, such as the 2008 milk and infant formula scandal.

That tragedy was an unexpected boost to American dairy producers, who now ship 15 to 17 percent of their milk abroad. Among them is Agri-Mark, which has facilities in Cabot and Middlebury and exports millions of dollars' worth of whey protein. But the road ahead is longer for specialty products such as cheese. In Hong Kong, the Vermonters noticed that high-end food markets and cheese shops offered “hardly any American cheese,” says Bonet Lewis, the son of Philadelphia Cream Cheese, Tillamook cheddar and products from Oregon Valley — but no Cabot cheddar or Spring Brook Farm Reading.

“When you go into the high-end retail stores, you see products marketed by their country's flag. You can identify Europe, New Zealand, Canada,” says Ross. “Certainly, products from afar can be marketed successfully if the Canadians can do it and the Europeans can do it and the New Zealanders can do it, so can we.”

Jeremy Stephenson, co-owner of Spring Brook Farm, represented four other Vermont cheese companies on the trip. He hadn't thought much about international exports until he set foot for the first time in China. “[The trip] forced me to look at different ways of selling our cheese through new channels,” Stephenson says. The company makes nearly 100,000 pounds of cheese a year and exports three other dairy farms in Reading, but it sells only 10 percent of the cheese in Vermont. “You have to set up of step out of what you know, and your routine, in terms of sales and marketing,” he says. “It broadened my overall view of sales.”

For years, the prevailing notion has been that the Chinese areaverse to dairy products, even lactose intolerant. Yet Stephenson saw those myths dissipate at a Shanghai food and longevity trade show where he set out platters of his rack-and-style cheese. Reading, as well as Cabot Agri-Cheddar, thrive from Vermont Creamery and Boyer

More food after the classifieds section PAGE 10

food

Brian Blac and Cabot Clothboud Cheddar from the Collins at Jager Hill. "Everybody on the booth thought our cheese was a magnet," he says. The samples were snapped up eagerly.

Even if most Chinese have little knowledge of American cheese, there's another built-in market in the country. Stephano notes aspects "There's a lot of Europeans, Americans and Australians living on the Pacific Rim, especially in the major cities," he says.

Mopie has a slightly larger presence in the Chinese market, but that sector is still dominated by Canadian — and that's something Arnold Gosselin thinks a lot about. A seventh-generation

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PRODUCTS.**

**CHUCK ROSE, VERMONT
SECRETARY OF
AGRICULTURE**

cheese maker and owner of Benelli's/Levi's Goodie Family Farm, he's been marketing his products abroad for 20 years and currently sells in 35 countries. Gosselin, who was part of the Vermont export delegation, recalls being surprised to find one of his maple products for sale in a Chinese store, a distributor had shipped it there without his knowledge. "Some people know about it, some people don't. It's still a raw market," he says.

Gosselin took part in meetings with Chinese importers and distributors that had been set up by the USDA. He says "some meetings were on target, and some weren't even close," and that exporting a low-margin commodity such as maple syrup "can be full of fiscal holes." Still, he thinks the Asian market is important to pursue. With maple production growing faster than current demand, Gosselin says, "we need to keep developing our marketing."

How do you sell a food product that isn't made in the Chinese culture? "A lot of the Chinese people we met didn't express a desire for other cuisines," acknowledges Burdett Lewis, who found herself accompanied by very South Asian dishes. She suggests that Vermont could introduce maple as an ingredient in phos, sauces, baked goods and ice creams, perhaps via chefs. "Everyone loved maple, but they were trying to figure out what the usage might be," she says.

Calculus is key, Weiss, who once lived in southern China in a Fulbright scholar is often asked is also pondering that country's consumption patterns as he plans ways to sell Barr Hill G&H and other spirits. As a young student, Weiss was privy to Chinese drinking culture,

which is vastly different from that of the West. "The Chinese — are partial to brown spirits and are crazy about French wine — but are less prone to buy bottles of premium liquor to drink at home," he says. "Retail sales of spirits are infinitesimal compared to an enormous consumption."

While the Western group was in Asia, a once secondly occurred Barr Hill G&H was a gold medal at the International Wine and Spirit Competition in Hong Kong, which Ross accepted on the company's behalf. However, that doesn't assure smooth sailing for the product in China. The mainland has much more complicated sales channels, Ross said, and tariffs that don't favor Hong Kong, where Barr Hill G&H is already sold.

"It's important piece of evidence we received is that our product will be really expensive in China," says Weiss, who notes that is a 17 percent tariff is just one element of the costs involved in exporting spirits to that country. "I think that can be an asset, though," he says.

"We're told we should target luxury clientele. People in China want what they can't get. You have to create an image of scarcity and exclusivity."

Weiss is neither surprised nor disappointed that, like others on the trip, he didn't make a single sale, he didn't expect to. "Business in China takes a long time. It takes, goshaw," he says, referring to the Chinese concept of business connections nurtured slowly — and sometimes aided by frequent gift exchanges. (He handed out gin and raw honey.) "The trip was always success, not necessarily in terms of any of us getting direct sales," Weiss says, "but in terms of gaining a much broader understanding of the market and how it works." He met with 10 people he recalls, but considers only two or three "potential partners."

As Arnold (Gosselin) said, being in China was like being outside this big room. "You can tell that's a party going on inside, and we're just outside the windows," notes Burdett Lewis.

Like Weiss, Ross thinks the trip laid important groundwork for future sales of local spirit-based goods. But he was glad to get home. In China, he found the perpetual traffic "both impressive and infuriating," but adds, "The air is so thick you almost need a spoon to breathe it. You could taste the air. It really made me very glad to be a Vermonter." ☺

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REFERENCES

though separated by the Atlantic ocean, Vermont and Ireland have verdant landscapes, harsh climates and ... An Irish Christmas in America in common. Now in its ninth season, the multimedia show taps into the holiday spirit with a blend of music, dance, history and photo projections. An all-star band of traditional musicians anchors the production, delivering ballads and instrumental tunes with heartfelt themes. Joining them onstage, award-winning class dancer Samantha Harvey, singer and recordist Anna Devine Bagley and acclaimed vocal duo Lumiere (pictured) lend their talents to a celebration of Emerald Isle customs.

AN IRISH CHRISTMAS IN AMERICA

Friday, December 13, 7:30 p.m., at Woodstock Town Hall Theatre, \$10-66 info: 852-9661, pentaglyph.com
Saturday, December 14, 1 p.m. at Krieger Park Performing Arts Center, \$10-66 info: 852-4634, springercenter.org

DEC. 13 & 14 | HOLIDAYS

'Tis the Season



DEC. 12-15 | HOLIDAYS

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In the 1970s, Carol Langstaff founded *South*. Based in Harrover, N.H., as an offshoot of her family's Mount Morris-based theater company, *South* has since become a multi-generational troupe with themed seasonal performances such as *The Christmas Eve in Appalachia*. Celebrations of the Winter Solstice Drawing from the region's rich music of harp, bagpipes, the production melds song and dance with storytelling. A chorus of more than 70 local performers backs multi-instrumentalist Pete Sutherland, a fiddle player, and a singer, Sutherland, who explore the roots of mountain music.

the Christmas Eve in Appalachia

Thursday, December 12 and Friday, December 13, 7 p.m., at Sunday, December 14, 2 and 7 p.m., at Sunday, December 15, 1 and 5 p.m. at the grandstanding Auditorium, Krieger Park Performing Arts Center, \$10-38 info: 852-4634, springercenter.org

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conferences

WORLDWIDE PRESS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING Journalists convene for presentations, workshops, discussions that address trends in industry topics. An awards ceremony follows. Laurel, Md. Mon.-Wed. 9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. \$49-95. Contact: www.wpaonline.com. Info: 434-2442.

education

PARTNERSHIP FOR CHANGE IMPLEMENTATION TEAM MEETING Students, educators, parents, staff teachers and community partners discuss current initiatives, technology, climate and Burlington's needs. CH Model and Independent advice. L. Loring, Fairfax High School 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Free. Info: 361-2340.

etc.

RESEARCH BY YOUR BACKPACK Vermont Business Alliance Resource Award Roundtable at University of Vermont, Plattsburgh and Middlebury, who highlight current economic and research trends in the state. Plattsburgh 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Info: 361-2340.

SCOUTS EASTERN Local Scouts answer questions about camps and officers during day programs. Otisville, Vt. Mon.-Wed. 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Free. Info: 434-4444.

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SCOUTS EASTERN, SPIRITS OF VERMONT **ICEBERG LAGER** Iceberg beer adds the chemistry and flavor of 100% pure Vermont-grown ingredients to its beer. Local distributors: OCHO Lake Aqueduct and Seaside Country Club. Ocho Lake, Champlain 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. \$12-22. For pickup and up to 100 more.

FILL THE NEIGH Filled cheese is a staple meal prepared by local restaurants and served in creative bowls made by third graders. Montpelier, Vt. Sunday 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Info: 361-2340.

WISDOM GARDEN WORKSHOP Retired garden teachers for innovative methods for growing and harvesting winter greens. Montpelier, Vt. Sunday 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Info: 361-2340.

fitness

OPEN HOUSE GAMES Players of varying ages enjoy board games at the public library. Montpelier, Vt. Sunday 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Info: 361-2340.

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ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR PROFESSIONAL HOLIDAY Acknowledge the hard work of professionals in the industry. Montpelier, Vt. Sunday 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Info: 361-2340.

CELEBRATE HOLIDAY Celebrate the holiday with a special event. Montpelier, Vt. Sunday 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Info: 361-2340.

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BELLY DANCE WITH DOLLY PIER Dancings from around the world and the 1940s. No cash bar. 1000 Lakeside, Portsmouth, VT 1000 Lakeside and 1000 Lakeside. September 14-6 p.m. \$4 suggested donation. Info: 540-6200

WOMEN'S SOUTHERN SMOKEHOUSE DANCE Ladies of all ages and all 11 are welcome and learn a repertoire of steps in a relaxing, non-competitive atmosphere. Refreshments follow. Franklin Free Library, Burlington 5-8 p.m. \$4 suggested donation. Info: 855-124-1032

environment

INTRODUCTION TO ECOLOGICAL DESIGN & PERMACULTURE Ecological design is a way of thinking and acting that seeks to positively impact the ecosystem—how buildings, landscapes, or other human enterprises fit into, and support, the natural world. September 14-6 p.m. 52. Info: 540-620-6447

film

CHAMPLAIN FILM SOCIETY The Champlain Film Society presents an evening of local and international film. September 14-6 p.m. 52. Info: 540-620-6447

food & drink

CANOE CANE MAKING DEMONSTRATION See 1000 Lakeside 5-8 p.m.

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RELIQUARY ARTIST'S MARKET See 1000 Lakeside 5-8 p.m.

HOLIDAY BENTLEY CORNER & FEETBALL A buffet of food and beverages to accompany the football game. September 14-6 p.m. 52. Info: 540-620-6447

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Listen Up

Ben Taylor talks about his music, a surprising new project and, yeah, his famous parents

BY DAN ROLLES

Ben Taylor is a celebrity kid. You, it's cool to call him that. But, after all, how he refers to himself? Taylor's parents are James Taylor and Carly Simon, two singer-songwriters who hardly need an introduction—or perhaps death away—has musical lineage, so many other celeb kids might, Ben Taylor embraces it, even effs not always a comfortable fit.

Much of Ben Taylor's music, up to and including his 2012 record, *Listening*, evokes his parents, if possible, comparable to that of his parents—especially *Just of Dad*. While he's proud of and has heard much from his legacy, he's careful not to let that looming shadow creep plenty define him. A raft of upcoming projects, including one certain record a particular reveals there is more to Ben Taylor than simply inheriting the family business. In advance of his show at the Higher Ground Showroom lounge this Friday, December 13, with local songwriter Caroline Rose, we spoke with Taylor by phone from California.

SEVEN DAYS: You didn't get involved with music until later in your life, which is surprising, given your famous folks. What took you so long?

BEN TAYLOR: With some rare exceptions, for many young kids to get into a heavy music practice when they're young enough to avoid as young adults, their parents have to really force them into it. And I think the kind of parents who force their kids into that are often not genuine music fans themselves. The famous musician like me try to shelter their kids from the pressure of comparison for as long as possible. And I think that happens a lot with celebrity kids, which is what I want my group of second-generation family business entrepreneurs. So it's partially that and it's partially because they're treasured, on account of all of the adoration they see that parents receive.

SD: I can see that being intimidating. A lot of people would have unrealistic expectations.

BT: I think they do. And no one more than me.

SD: Well, that might be a good quality for someone in your position to have.

BT: It's a good quality to have... sometimes. Being your own worst critic, you can use that to make you motivate and train and have a good work ethic. But if you stop too far with it, it can make you neurotic.

SD: At first glance, the title of your last record, *Listening*, almost seems like a directive to the listener. But it's really more about you listening, isn't it?

BT: Listening is something everyone needs to get better at. I can't preach to any other other than my own private, personal choir. And when I do, about talking I get sick of it. But I can still study the one to question. I'm the one who is having a hard time listening, having a hard time understanding.

It has to do with your style of communication. People have a way of fitting out what it is they're talking about and then having a preconception of what that conversation is going to be.

And then they use their words to control what that place. As a result, people spend a lot of the time thinking about what they're going to say next, instead of listening to what he's saying. And I certainly do that too much myself. It's trying to be clear and have the right thing to say. I actually miss the point.

SD: I think you just described my entire journalistic career.

BT: [Laughs] Some said, "Sell your cleverness and buy the wilderness." That's the best advice I've ever heard.

SD: What are you working on now?

BT: A couple of different albums. One of them, I think, the last Ben Taylor album I've ever made. And, like I said, I'm hypercritical of myself, so that means a lot to me. And then I'm doing a side project, an electronic project called *Another Day*, which is an amalgam of it on Taylor. It's in the midst of making money, each year there's a lot of my spare time.

SD: When Ben Taylor is an EDM fan?

BT: It's something I do sleep kind. Most of the concerts I go to are not the kind of music I love. I generally go to see rap shows, I go to see DJ. I like to dance. And when I go to see a show, that's what I want to do, because I'm a bad dancer.

SD: [Laughs] I admit it, I'm surprised.

BT: Well, I did that because I was inspired to go into the family business and I'm so proud of what my parents have done. To be following in their footsteps, there is a certain amount of pressure. It's a little bit more pride and desire than I'd like it to be sometimes. So I go back and forth between bringing elements of electronic music into the Ben Taylor set and thinking, Oh, God. These people want to hear improvisative, philosophical songs, and I'm trying to

with their faces. So I think that's a shame. I was a singer-songwriter like Taylor, it's hard to let those things go so easily. As proud as I am to be my parents' son and of the music I make, the whole singer-songwriter thing can get a little uptight.

SD: Do you think the uptightness surrounding the singer-songwriter thing is maybe why whenever journalists ask you a question about your parents, they start by apologizing for the question?

BT: [Laughs] Yeah, they always do that. It's funny. I know somebody and I'm asking an innocent question, I always ask what their parents do. Parents are people's archetypal examples. So why wouldn't you ask somebody about their parents? I get the sense that a lot of celebrity kids have chips on their shoulders and don't want to talk about their parents, so maybe that's the root of the pre-emptive apology. But the way I look at it is that, if I get into this business thinking I was going to talk to press and not talk about who my parents are, I would have to be smoking something strange. ☺

INFO

Ben Taylor with Caroline Rose: Friday, December 13, 8:30 p.m. at the Higher Ground Showroom Lounge in Midtown.



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SOUNDbites

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31



of **JAN SWENSON**'s recent departure. Any singing new Renda might want to drop by if only to see if you can keep up with guitarist **JAN KOS** and drummer **REN ROY**.

Speaking of Grand Point North, one of the festival highlights for me was witnessing the jaw-dropping, show-stopping antics of soul singer **CHARLES BRADLEY**. So intense were the Screaming Eagle of Soul's hip-swinging moves that my girlfriend cursed an incredible new term to describe them: *gyrochutes*.

We weren't the only ones taken by Bradley's hyperexaggerated performance. At one point during the apex of Bradley's act, local songwriter **JAN COONS** tapped me on the shoulder.

"That," he said, nodding toward the stage. "I think I'm pregnant."

If that's not endorsement enough for you to go see Bradley at the Higher

Ground Ballroom this Saturday, December 16, I don't know what to (other than an outright after the show on page 36, of course.)

The 2011 Grammy Awards could have a Vermonty feel, as a pair of artists with strong Green Mountain ties are nominated for nifty little stanzas. That includes self-described "two-time Grammy Award loser" **NOEL CASE**. The semi-recent Vermont transplant is nominated for Best Alternative Music Album for her latest, *The Worst Things Get the Hardest I Fight*, the *Harder I Fight, the More I Love You*, which, as Case revealed in a recent NPR interview, is obviously about me. It's cool, Nick. I love you, too (Editor's note: No, it's not.)

The other Grammy nominee with VT connections is **DELLA MAE**, a Nashville-based Americana outfit



fronted by **DELLA WOODHAY**, formerly of the local folk duo **DELLA MAE**. This *World Of Cuckoo* is nominated for Best Bluegrass Album.

Last but not least, I goofed. Last week's column featured a libretto about famed American producer **JAN ROCKY** sitting in this Thursday, December 15, with **OLIVIA MCNEIL** — me, slouch as a producer himself — as part of the latter's ongoing residency at Baglio Cafe in Montpelier. Such a big deal was this rare appearance that I broke with custom and station and gave you a heads up on the show a week early. The only problem: The show was actually last Thursday, not this one. Oops.

Either because he's a hell of a guy or, as I've long suspected, writing this column grants me superpowers to alter the future, **Rocky** is covering my ass. Though he wasn't scheduled to, he'll again join McNeil at Baglio this Thursday, December 15, allowing those of you who missed him last week because I screwed up the dates the chance to see him live. Thanks, **Rock**. And just in case I really do have future-changing prescient superpowers, **next weeks** will throw the Holiday Ho Ho Ho Down this year after all. New England's Persian night end **NOT DISCOVERED**'s season-ending ACE. Year was maddening and as if it just a mild case of the whites, and Nick Case will invite me to a romantic dinner at her farmhouse after she wins her Grammy (Editor's note: Dear, poor perfidious reads this, right?) ☺



Listening In

A peek at what was on my mind, Tuesday night, December 14th, this week.

BRUNO MARS, "Automatic" EP

THE CATALAN, *Live Vertical*

HAIRY WIG, *Live Live* EP

HAIRY WIG, *Live at 1000*

HAROLD ARDEN, *A Cold and Christmas*
(The Christmas EP at 1000)

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WED. 11

burlington arena

CLUB WHITE HORSE: Metal Monday Presents: Sonics. Open: No. 9. 8 Maple. Inq.: 324-5010. 10+.

THE WHITE PLANET: Boston City Hall. Inq.: 229-1000. 10+.

FLANNERY D-D: Karaoke. 9:30 p.m. free.

MALIBU GOLF: Western Wednesday with DJ Dady. 10:00 p.m. (closed). 10 p.m. free.

J.P. & PUE: Punk Out with Dave (closed). 10 p.m. free.

THE WHITE PLANET: Boston City Hall. Inq.: 229-1000. 10+.

LEAVING IN THE NIGHT: Open House with Andy. 10:30 p.m. free.

MONKEY HOUSE: All-Music Party. 10:30 p.m. free.

SECTION 8: 10:30 p.m. (closed). Inq.: 229-1000. 10+.

ON TAP BAR & GRILL: Free. 10:30 p.m. free.

RADIO HEAD: 10:30 p.m. (closed). Inq.: 229-1000. 10+.

THE WHITE PLANET: Boston City Hall. Inq.: 229-1000. 10+.

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WED. 11. THE 11. THE SOUTHERN BELLES (JACK)

For Whom the Belle Tolls

Richmond, Va.'s the **SOUTHERN BELLES** corral elements of jazz, rock, funk and country into an eclectic, groove-centric amalgamation of psychedelia and twang that both honors their Southern roots and reveals an affinity for Frank Zappa and Captain Beefheart. The band plays a pair of Vermont shows this week: Wednesday, December 11, at Red Square in Burlington and Thursday, December 12, at the Monkey House in Montpelier.

regional

MONROVIA: Open. Mon. 8 p.m. free.

CLIVE BOWLEY: Completely Obscured. 10:30 p.m. free.

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Colby Dix, i am. it is. you should be.

(SELF-RELEASED CD DIGITAL DOWNLOAD)



Most Vermonters likely know Colby Dix as one-fourth of the band Touchpoints, a full-on-funk local supergroup of sorts that also includes Chris Frindy, Arnes Pedersen and Miles Jon Pedersen. That band is notorious for its apparently non-politically correct brand of humor, a wise, off-color style that makes Touchpoints' Dixen like Ratli by comparison. But as he reveals on his debut solo record, i am. it is. you should be., there is more to Colby Dix than dick jokes.

In truth, Dix has accomplished far more as a musician than simply

being part of a Fishman side project. As an engineer and/or performer, the New York grad has worked with the likes of country superstars Brooks & Dunn, indie popsters Matt & Kim, leads the Jazz Mandolin Project and just started the Breakfast, to name a few. That's a diverse resume. And it's one that informs the wide-ranging sounds found on his freshman solo outing.

Dix's varied musical interests are unquestionably a plus, and he generally wears his hat of many colors well. "Glossy Thin" is a pretty, slow-burning folk ballad that bears some resemblance to the work of Fleetwood's Joe Percore in his Soul Mountain days. "Forget This" is a scintillating number that should get the juke band out swinging. Dix follows that up with an elegant acoustic song, "I Know I Know I Know," that rags at the heartstrings. "Too Far" is an ardent, atmospheric pop that hints at an all-very-for-Dennis "Jenny" decade Dix' twanging between a clean folkie and a strained chest voice that suggests time spent with a Justin Vernon record or three. The album closes on a trio of songs, "Try as You Might," "WTF" and "20 Jams," that

further display Dix's chameleon quality, venturing into ethereal indie folk, gritty rock and a sparse, tender acoustic ballad, respectively.

Dix's multifaceted approach is intriguing. But if his record has a flaw, it might be that he takes aim at too many styles. Individually, almost all of these songs are well crafted and compelling — though these ears could do without the adult contemporary leanings of opener "Two." The music is that, taken collectively, the album struggles to settle into a cohesive groove. But that's a minor gripe, considering the record's many other fine qualities. And, given the cherry-picking manner in which most listeners consume music now, perhaps it's actually beneficial. In any case, i am. it is. you should be. is a strong debut that often borders on brilliance and reminds us we've had talent.

i am. it is. you should be. by Colby Dix is available at colbydix.com. Dix plays a release show at Newer's in Burlington this Saturday, December 14.

DAN COLLIER

SEARCHING FOR THE LATEST
TOP-LEVEL TIGER-ROARS



Peter Day, Break Down the Heavy

(SELF-RELEASED CD DIGITAL DOWNLOAD)

For more than a decade, Peter Day has no friends to land rickens the Gift, a group whose technical prowess and ironic humor for tight harmonies and steady melodies have made them staples of the Vermont scene at large. That band's most recent album, 2009's *Dropkicker*, found them shedding some of their earlier jaunty tendencies in favor of a heavier, more pop-centric sound. On his new solo record, *Break Down the Heavy*, Day continues that shift, delivering a string of ballads of tunes that should satisfy fans of the Gift and attract new listeners with a pop-rock sensibility.

On his website, Day outlines a lengthy list of influences that reads like who's who of pop rock luminaries: Paul Simon, Rubber Soul-era Beatles, Tom Petty, James Taylor. Those are pretty common touchstones for anyone who has penned a catchy verse-chorus-verse in the last 50 years. And in Day's case, he wears his influences proudly on his rolled up Oxford shirt-sleeves. It's as



simple logic about them as he is about his unbridled hooks.

"Heart Throb All Along" sets the record's upbeat tone with a driving groove and warm chords of guitars and keys. Day drops the record's title at the bridge, repeating, "Break down the heavy, gonna find a song!" If James Taylor and Paul Simon got together to sit, swivel each other with agonizing crooning, it might sound something like this.

Day writes that his solo record was born out of finding beauty in dark times. "The Heavy That Surrounds" is the most overt example of that idea. And especially at the harmony-heavy, Doobie Brothers-yoked chorus, it is undeniably beautiful. The same could be said of "If You Looked Both Ways,"

Drives by a sparse piano progression and accented with steady (Dan) atmospheric, it is the album's lone moment of darkness. But even given the song's cloudy disposition, Day finds a ray of light and gives it voice with an uplifting blue-eyed-soul sensibility.

Forming the core of Day's band are drummer Sean France, keyboardist Luan Campos and his Gift collaborator, Clint Morrison. They're joined by percussionist Dakota Hixon, bassist Jack Weinstein, vocalists Joe Coons and Mike Pedersen, and, on the opening track, banjo player Seth Palomo. That's a top-notch supporting act. Collectively, they frame Day's compositions with funk and soul, leaving just enough room for the album's true star, Day to shine. And he does, offering a warm suite of songs that could easily earn the most cynical hearts.

Break Down the Heavy by Peter Day is available at peterdaymusic.com. Day will play a CD release show at the Siney Parlor in Burlington on Saturday, December 21.

DAN COLLIER

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A Ride With a View

Photographer Dean "Blotto" Gray BY SARAH TUFF

It's one thing to snowboard the world's biggest mountain. It's another snowboard the world's big got mountains while logging along camera, equipment and handling a lens safely on death-defying terrain in snow-cum-tempest conditions. That's just what Rutland town's Dean "Blotto" Gray does for nearly three quarters of the year, as the principal photographer for Boston Snowboards.



The 44-year-old earned his nickname in the late 1980s when a lucky blizzard on the word "blotto" during a skateboarding session in the desert. But focus surfaces, one now his preferred steeping grounds. Blotto's work captures not only the beauty of snowboarding but also the confidence, skillness, history and style that have helped make the sport, and therein, a considerable cultural phenomenon of the 21st century.

Blotto has been working for Burton since 1999 and as principal photographer since 2003. He was recently named one of the top 50 ski athletes in the Real Deal II issue (Image Quest 2013). Judges selected his "inspiration" image of snowboarder Jeremy Jones hanging off a building and sliding down a ramp made of snow from one of thousands of photos from around the world. Blotto carved out time to talk with Sarah Tuff about his life of riding and making art on the money road.

SEVEN DAYS How did you get into photography?

BLOTTO: During the mid '90s, I worked for a small snowboard company we didn't have the budget to hire photographers and graphic designers every time we needed something done, so we purchased a camera and computer and taught ourselves.

SEVEN DAYS You grew up in Arizona and Texas—was it at college that you started snowboarding?

BLOTTO: I started riding BMX bikes in Texas [and] found skateboarding some years later in Phoenix, which eventually led to the discovery of snowboarding in northern Arizona. I was attending college in Flagstaff. For graphic design, snowboarding took over my life.



Dean "Blotto" Gray

Southern. Homophones your mind, so there are endless opportunities to capture the crew in action.

SD What are some of the farthest-flung places you've shot, or snowboarded?

B: Northern Japan is step the destination but each scene does to ensure snowfall, photo opportunities, galleries and the overall beauty and view of the country. In the snow world, heading into the Middle East to document professional mountain bikers looking for suitable terrain in Jordan was quite the experience.

SD What does it mean to be the principal photographer for Burton?

B: I'm blessed to work with so many creative, talented and motivational individuals at Burton. My conviction and the team did are next level, riding the bar every day, which is a constant motivation to do my best, keep my photography progressing and, of course, have fun.

SD Are you riding to get a particular shot, or how does that work?

B: Snowboard photography takes you to

three primary locations, all very different from each other, requiring a mix of modes of transportation and preparation. It is in the backcountry, accessed via helicopter, snowmobile or hiking. Second is working within the urban environment, moving around by automobile. Third is shooting in bounds at the resorts—usually in the springtime—using snowcats to build large terrain park features specifically for our needs.

Most of the riding, for me, happens when taking or using a helicopter. It's my mode of transportation. It is descending the mountain. There are times when I have camera in hand while snowboarding, so taking photos as we move about, but most of the time the tripod is set up and I'm moving from angle to angle as the session progresses.

SD What gear are you now bringing to shoots?

B: The amount and type of gear varies depending on whether we're scheduled for backcountry, urban or resort. The camera body and lenses are used for every photo shoot, with the amount of lenses, cables and tripod I get to bring that changed, given the location and complexity of the shot list.

SD How have Instagram and other social media channels impacted your work?

B: Instagram has given photographers the ability to display their work more frequently, engaging followers on a daily basis. Facebook included. A website allows you to expand on our given subject, photo shoot or travel updates by posting a number of "beyond-the-scenes" photos with descriptive text. If you stick Instagram, Facebook, a website and print media together, the photography publishing is a lot complete.

SD Any close encounters with snowboarders, yet to do with cult celebrity snowboarders?

B: Definitely snowboard is the biggest variable while working in the backcountry, big mountain or resort. In snow are some risks highly. We need the snowpack to carry any slope we plan to descend and make the decision to drop in or pull back. When it's the slope could produce the best clip ever, it's not worth the risk—there's enough terrain and days in the season to play it smart. One line. I fear in the backcountry? Absolutely not.

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which facilitate the movement of a child in response to their changing needs and interests. The child can then move on to the next activity.

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Curses, Foiled Again

Police investigating a burglary in Lake Worth, Fla., identified Derek Gold, 19, as their suspect because he left his cell phone at the scene, and his mother called. Investigators arrived and asked the woman whose phone it was. They then arrested Gold and Kristina Symonson, 19, with the stolen goods. (South Florida Sun Sentinel)

An firefighter in Jacksonville, Ark., (I want to) Larry Bennett's plan to leave a fire after employee accident because the intended victim overheard the plot for himself when Bennett, 68, bust down his wife's talking to a third party about burning down the man's house. "We'll kill him in it." The call lasted 49 minutes, giving the target time to alert police, who found that his gas stove had been tampered with. (Jacksonville's KATV-TV)

Sunny Days

Utility companies in Georgia, Arizona, California and Idaho, fearing the loss of revenue from customers who install rooftop solar panels, are proposing to charge solar customers extra or to roll back programs that allow those customers to trade the solar power they generate for power from the grid that they used when the sun isn't shining. Georgia Power, for example, wants owners of basic home solar systems to pay an extra \$22 a month. (Associated Press)

Most auto parks are facing the wrong way, according to a study by the Penn State Research Institute. Instead of

Cost Co apologized for selling Bi Bles in the fiction section of its store

printing words as most do to get the maximum benefit, panels pointed west produce 49 percent more electricity during peak demand times. (Theohaggan.com)

Slightest Provocation

David Pirie, 46, shot a Walmart name-brand manager at a store in Anchorage, Alaska, who asked him to leave after he wouldn't put his service dog on a leash outside the store. After wounding Jason Mabo, 33, Pirie, a death suspect, tried to flee in a motorcade shopping cart, but police arrested and stopped him at the door. (Anchorage Daily News)

Hazards of Cabin Life

A man was shot while sitting on the toilet as a cabin in Norway's Hvaler district when a heater wiring at a music festival. Police investigating Asdr Strommen after told police boarder center NRK that the heater had not just the animal, pierced the cabin's wooden wall and wounded the man in the stomach. (Reuters)

Heists of the Week

New York City police accused William Rostman, 58, of as many as 37 bank thefts in 11 weeks, according to an affidavit at JPMorgan Chase, his preferred target. Investigators said that the thief never took money, however, only rage inside the front door. "I tell them to begonia," Rostman explained, adding that he got \$30 or higher per bag. (New York Post)

British police reported that thieves cut a hole in the curtain side of a delivery truck parked in Cookhill, Worcester shire, and stole more than 600 cases of food items with swag. Police suspected for information "about anyone trying to sell large quantities of food items because to surprise in a room stores." (BBC News)

Authorities charged David A. Nease, 87, with stealing four cases of hand bells from Shubogun (W.) First Presbyterian Church, where he was an elder, and passing them. The bells, each weighing 40 pounds, are valued at \$10,000. (Wahogun Press)

Fant or Fiction?

Costco apologized for selling Bibles in the fiction section of its store in West Valley, Calif., after church pastor Gabe Kallend noticed them three weeks before shopping. Two weeks later, newspapers columnist Robert Alcorn was shopping at another Costco near Los Angeles and spotted movie character Ron Burgundy's "bibliography" in the non-fiction section. (Los Angeles Times)

Government Givenway Programs

The federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) made up 420 million cigarettes — more than 2.1 million cartons — during at least 20 separate sting operations, according to the Justice Department's inspector general. The agency also misused some of the \$60 million in profits from the stings, including letting a tobacco distributor working as a confidential informant keep \$4.9 million received from cigarette sales to criminal suspects. ATF Director J. Todd Jones blamed mismanagement and oversight lapses but insisted that "the reports findings do not reflect current ATF policy or practice." (Associated Press)

An entrenched practice of claiming unearned overtime at the Department of Homeland Security costs taxpayers tens of millions of dollars a year, according to the federal Office of Special Counsel (OSC). Many DHS employees consider the overtime their due, while delayers told the OSC, pointing out that government managers trying to recruit new employees often promise guiding paychecks on a perk. "Employers will ask for their dues for as many two hours, catching up to 10 hours, talking to friends or using it for contract time," whistleblower Jose Rafael Suarez Bellos said. "It's pick-pocketing. Use it Ben." (Washington Post)

BI ISS by Harry Biles

ah, those aren't my diplomas — they're my medical malpractice attorneys

TED r All

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secondhand chords in your concertina wire

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THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

REPUBLICAN TO-DO LIST
WE'RE GOT TO FIGHT BACK
OUR CUTS TO FOOD STAMPS

WE'VE GOT TO FIGHT BACK
OUR CUTS TO FOOD STAMPS



AND WE MUST REMIND YOUNG
PEOPLE NOT TO SIGN UP FOR
OBAMACARE!

TELLING HEALTHY MOMS
NOT WOULD THEY EVER
NEED INSURANCE!



AND WE'LL NEED TO FIGHT THEM
AND HILL AGAINST THE LATEST
LEGISLATION TO RAISE THE MINIMUM
WAGE!

WE'VE AN ISSUE NOT ONLY
WE'VE GOT TO FIGHT THE FREE
CAROLERS WHILE WE'RE
AT IT!



AND WE MUST BEAL, ANY YEAR
TO CELEBRATE UNEMPLOYMENT
BENEFITS!

LET'S A JOB, UNLESS
THAT'S WHAT IT IS!



AND WE NEED TO URGE
LIBERALS ABOUT THE TRUE
MEANING OF CHRISTMAS!

THEY SURE DON'T UNDER-
STAND IF THE WAY WE DO.



AND WE NEED TO URGE
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FUNGUS

A COMIC STRIP BY
JAMES KOCHALKA
(CONTINUOUSLY TRANSLATED BY WILSON)

@Lor3



TO BE CONTINUED...



lower and more and

There are precious truths I could reveal to you right now that I've decided not to disclose. I don't think you're prepared to hear them yet. If I told you what the truth is, you wouldn't be receptive or able to register their full meaning. You might even misunderstand them. It is possible, however, that you could evolve rather quickly in the next two weeks. So let's see if I can nudge you in the direction of getting the experiences necessary to become ready. Meditation on what parts of you are immature or underdeveloped— aspects that may be hidden and grasped, but are not yet. That, once you identify what needs experience, you will expedite the ripening. And then you will become ready to welcome the precious truths.

could be easier for you to move over when you're not dealing with transfer up-close matters. With outside your circle, might be more attracted to your influence than what you see to home.

TALUS (April 20, May 20), in 2000, actress Sandra Bullock starred in three films, two of which earned her major assignments. Her first performance (in *All About Steve*) was hilarious, as Golden Raspberry Award for Worst Actress winner. But her second, in *28 Weeks Later*, was so good that she won Best Actress on the other hand; was her last year for Best Actress. (In thinking that, you may experience a former paradox in the coming year.) Talus' two of your efforts might be designated, while others are praised. It may mean for the case that your collection will be upgraded to the same time given. (How to respond? Learn from Bullock's example. The reward previous recognition specifies at the least is examined to build the Golden Raspberry and the Oscar.)

GEMINI [May 21-June 20] Around 2000 years ago, a Roman doctor named Scribonius wrote a book called *De Medicina* that listed over 600 kinds of foods and their health benefits. One of the foods he recommended was a food you've either consumed here or heard of: seaweed. Seaweed has been used as a tonic, health pill and even a medicine. He said that seaweeds were a rich source of fishy stuff, strong honey and rock salt. There's more to the story, as seaweed could be used with fruit, honey and glass. That's just a few words here and I propose that these three seaweeds have into greater relationships to the three choices in front of you right now. I'm going to suggest you go with the second option. At the very least, avoid the third.

CANCER [June 21-July 23] Are you feeling a bit panicky (worried and possibly) given the likelihood you've had to wrestle with lately? I wouldn't be surprised if you were. Even though you have passed some of the on-site tests, and solved some of the tricky riddles, you've been encouraged to do it with. They have no doubt contributed to the pinch-point problems. Now what can be done to help you recover your vibrant thinking? That's all you will have to do in response to the next significant temptations that will be coming your way. (The Cancer Network)

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LEO [July 13-Aug. 31] Have you ever situated yourself between two big buffaloes on a beach and basked in the primal power? Was there a special moment in your past when you found yourself sitting between two dominant people you loved and adored, soaking up the life-giving essence they exuded? Do you ever read a book that filled you with exultation as you learned to make that bridge to your soul? These are the best experiences I hope you seek out in the coming week. It is time to see you get nourished, strengthened, and to help you get your feet on solid ground.

VIRGO [Aug. 23 Sept. 22] Myrically appealing, this would be a precious love for you to make an offering to the sea goddess, in dreams or meditations or fantasies. I find just you dive down into the depths. I find the capricious tyrannical power in her natural habit and give her a special gift. Show her what attract you in the way you express love, or better exactly how you will transform wisdom in the future. If she is monstrous you misread her for a love. Maybe she is willing to accept you in your state, the deep feelings even conveniently measurable to you. Or perhaps she will teach you how to make another conscious secret you have been seeking from another.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) Don't linger in a doorway Libra. Don't camp out in a threshold or get stuck in the middle of anything. I ask, do you know your caution concerning the fact that this represents you without your own self? Not others. But if you remain ambivalent too much longer you may obstruct the influx of more definitive information. The best way to generate the clarity and attract the help you need will be to make decisions: move – either in or out, either forward or backward – either up or down.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) "I'm a rare person who wants to know what he doesn't want to hear" and "I can show just Dick Cavett. I will love it if you name yourself one of those rare types in the coming week. Scorpio. Can you bring yourself to be scrupulous to truths that might be disruptive? Are you willing to send out an invitation to the world asking to be shown evidences that contradict your fixed theories and theories?"

conclusions? If you do this hard work, I promise that you will be granted a breakthrough and a breakthrough. You might also be given a new mission to lead.

CAPRICORN (Jan. 20-Jan. 19) You're in a sunny way: English adjective that I want to invoke in order to ground you with the proper perspective. It refers to someone who invades or disturbs tranquility — like a child who disrupts work or business, trying to conclude or an adult when an intended stop. Now let's finally time to wrap up long unfinished business. You could afford to be indulgent in the coming days. Capricorn: This is the last sign of your sign. It would be healing for you to share children and circumstances. Another note: be sure to marry fully before the year. Sometimes you get to the end of the road and realize you're not there. Twice the real thing for ensuring the ones that matter register of others. See how this goes over, believe it!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) According to 19th-century British author John Caspary, "My knowledge is a tapestry that is a crucible of passions, a mix of intellects and stars of splendors, an island of arms." He didn't mean that literally of course. He was referring to the fact that the words contained in his books can indeed lead without the reader's notice. I think you will be able to seek out that level of arousal in the coming series. Aquarius, your thoughts need to be aired out and reimagined. Your beliefs are being tested for strenuous exercise, including some painful collisions. Do whatever it takes to power through before.

PISCES [Feb. 19-March 20] I am not for less! says Mesdies galvanized and women's rights advocate Lydie Gueho. But I'm not overblown by her! Pisces quite an interesting animal. It's like a pet, if you maintain it, it will bite. And if you understand it and accept it, it's your house. It might protect you." This is an excellent time to work on transforming your light within. Pisces, you have just the right kind of power over them: strong and crafty and dynamic, but not grotesque or scary as debauched. Please ready to make your home serve you, not drain you.

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